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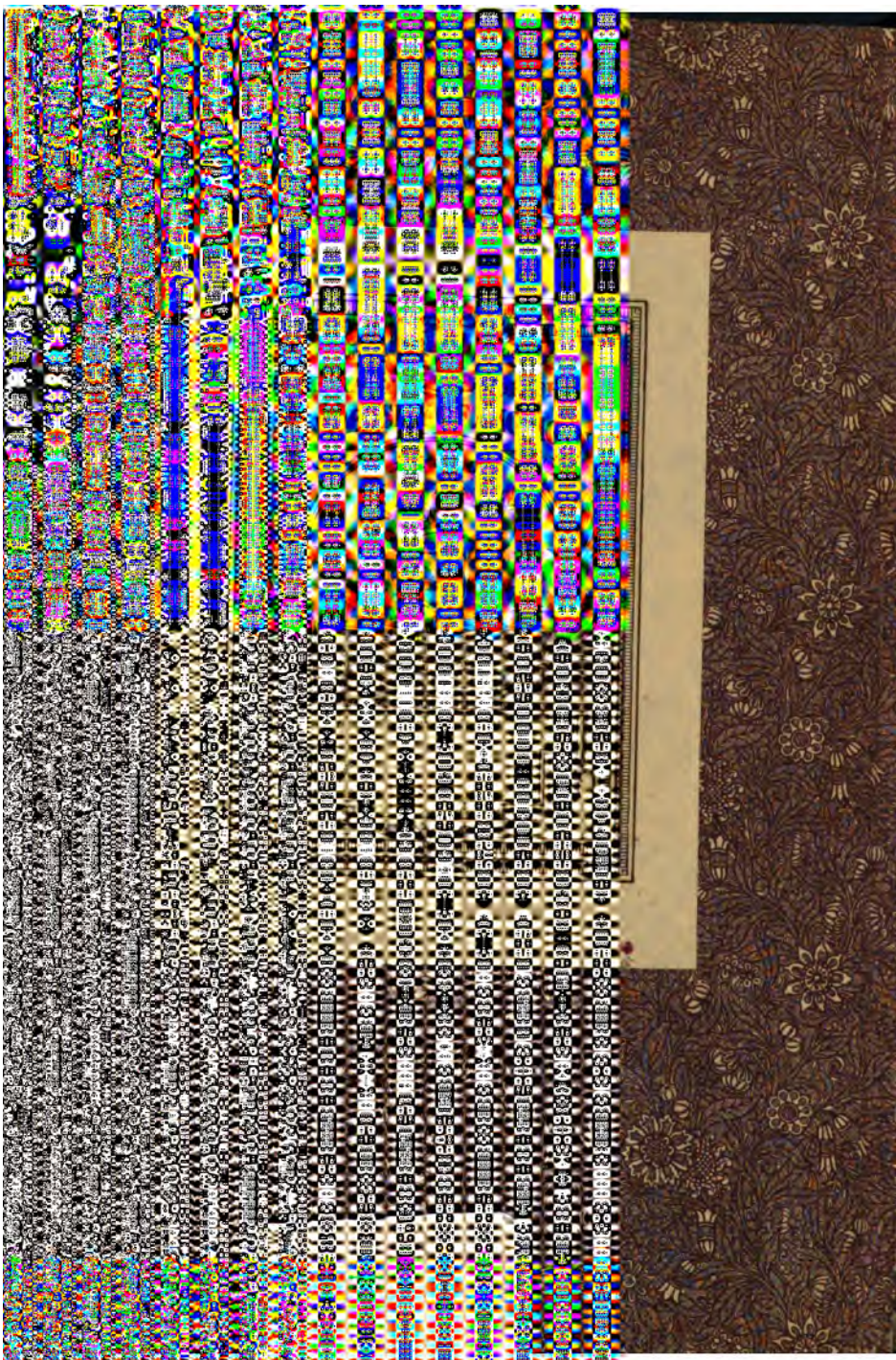
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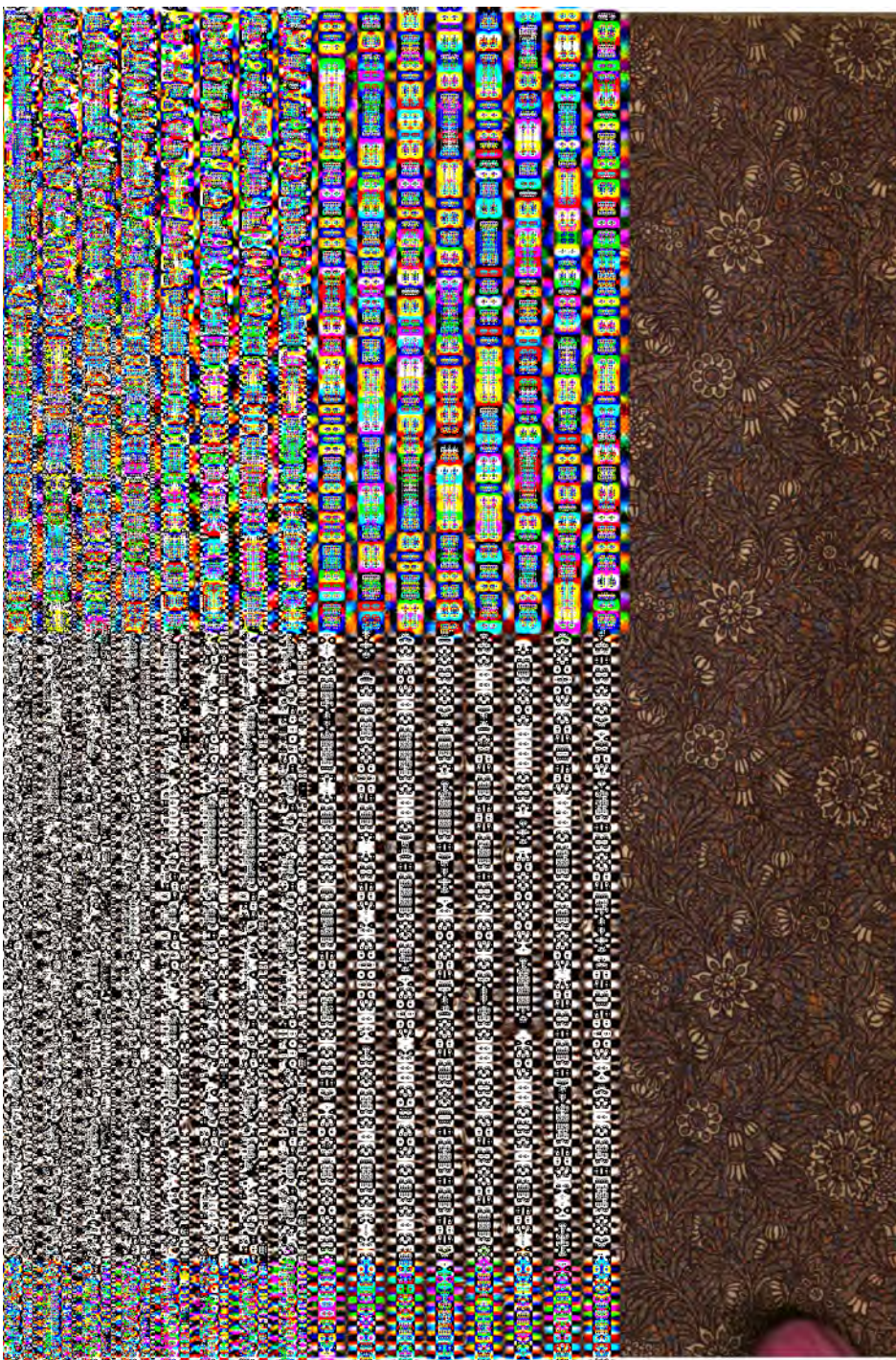
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MEDITATIONS AND DISQUISITIONS

UPON

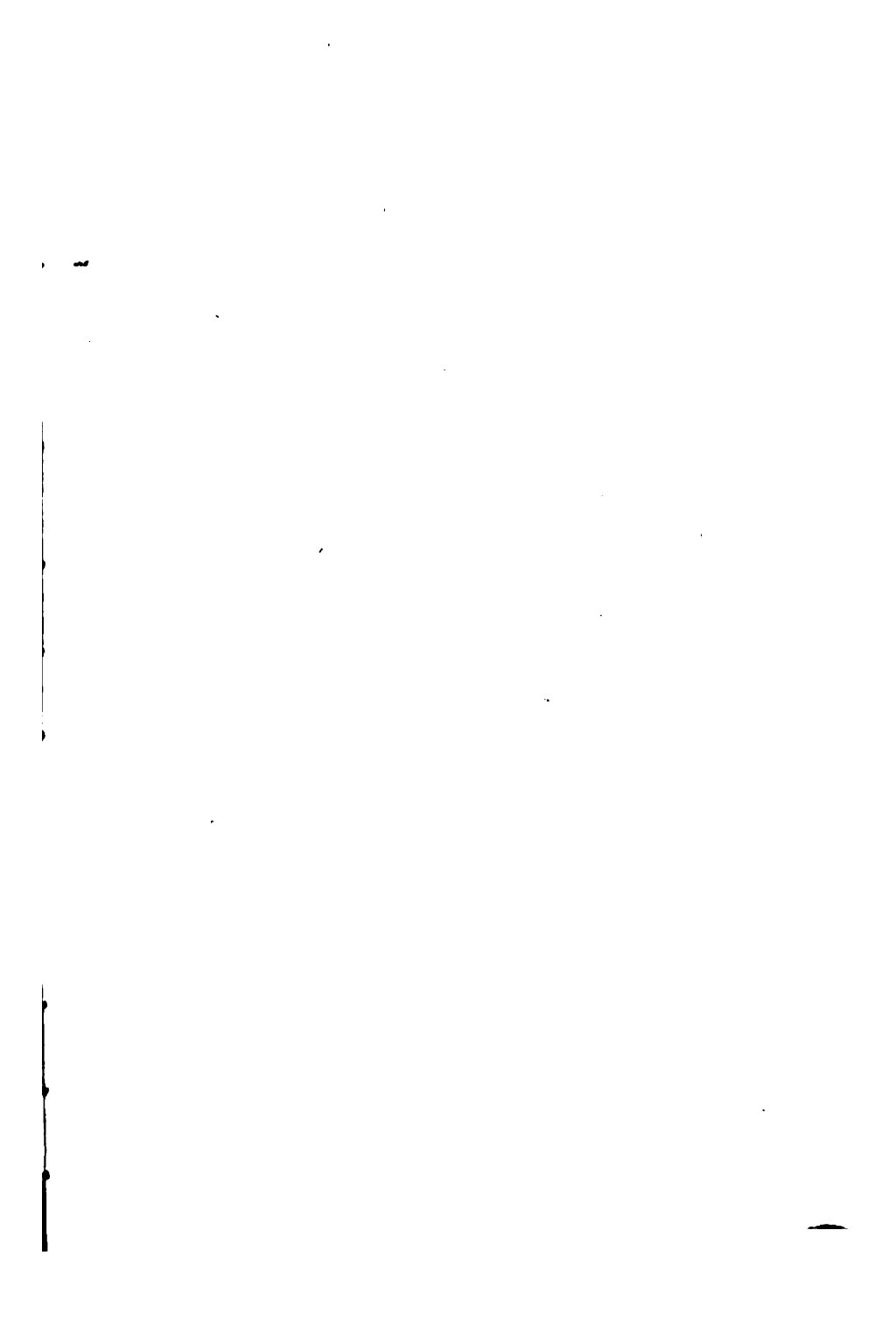
CERTAIN PSALMS.

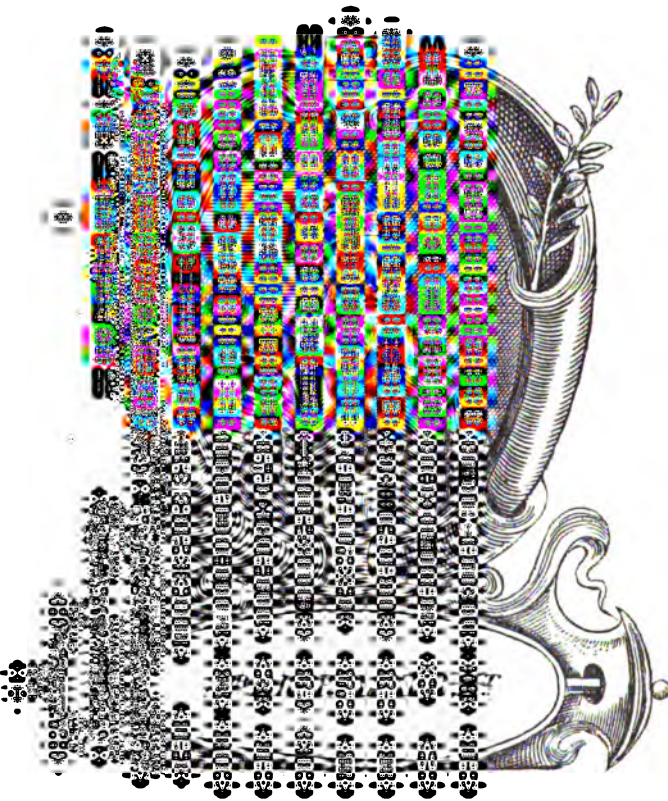
SIR R. BAKER, *Knight*.

1639-40.

REPRINTED 1882.







MEDITATIONS AND DISQUISITIONS

UPON

THE FIRST PSALM;

THE PENITENTIAL PSALMS;

AND

SEVEN CONSOLATORY PSALMS.

BY

SIR RICHARD BAKER, *KNIGHT*, 1568-1645

Author of "A Chronicle of the Kings of England," etc., etc.

(FIRST PRINTED, 1639—1640.)

A NEW EDITION.

WITH BRIEF EXPLANATORY NOTES, AND A TEXTUAL INDEX.

With a Memorial-Introduction by the Rev. A. B. Grosart, M.A.,
F.S.A., Editor of the Works, and Biographer, of Sibbes,
Brooks, and Gilpin, in "Nichol's Puritan Divines."

LONDON:

CHARLES HIGHAM, 27A, FARRINGDON STREET.

1882.



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English - H.
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MEMORIAL-INTRODUCTION.

THERE have been so many Worthies in Church and State, earlier and later, who have borne the name of SMITH—from sage and grave Sir THOMAS SMITH (or Smyth) to “silver-tongued” HENRY SMITH,—whose sermons are as *quick* to-day as when first preached to vast crowds of “gentle and simple ;” and from JOHN SMITH of Cambridge, to JOHN SMITH, “the Essex Dove,” and SAMUEL SMITH, of Prittlewell,—richest, rarest, memorablist of our minor Puritan divines—JOHN SHEFFIELD alone excepted ; and from ADAM SMITH to SYDNEY SMITH and ALEXANDER SMITH, and present-day GEORGE SMITH, of Coalville,—man of the big brave heart for the helpless, whether in brick-field, canal-boat, or gipsy camp,—leaving out of account many and many others of the multitudinous clan,—that I, for one, shrink from harsh or blaming word of any SMITH. And yet in the knowledge and recollection that Sir RICHARD BAKER—whose books on some of the “Psalms” after so long a time are herein reproduced—left an Autobiography which his son-in-law, “one SMITH,” destroyed, it is difficult to repress an objugation. Covering as his life did so much of the brilliant Elizabethan-Jacobean period, it gives one a heartache to think of how much perished when this ignoble SMITH turned to basest use the Autobiography of such a man. Now, we can but sorrowfully indulge the “Pleasures of Imagination” over it.*

* “Wood’s Athenæ” (s. n.) is our authority for the destruction of this MS., and as his informant was Sir Richard’s own daughter, there can be no doubt about it. The passage is as follows : “He also wrote his own life, which he left in MS. behind him ; burnt or made waste paper by one Smith, of Paternoster Row, who married one of his daughters.”

Perchance it had lacked the zest of SAMUEL PEPYS' immortal "Diary," but it could hardly have failed to illumine names and events and circumstances of a grand period, that should have been right welcome.

The BAKERS are a very old English family. Limiting ourselves to our Worthy's line of Cranbrook and Sissinghurst in Kent, I bring together here various scattered notices of the name and family—helped therein by the fine enthusiasm of a son of Cranbrook.*

1. ADAM BAKER, de Cranebrook, co. Kent, was living temp. King John.
2. JOHN, fil. ADAM BAKER, de Cranebrook, was plaintiff in a plea concerning lands 55th of Henry III., A.D. 1271.
3. THOMAS BAKER, de Cranebrook, paid the subsidy A.D. 1273.
4. NICHOLAS BAKER, of Cranbrook, was living temp. Edward II.; died before the 1st of Edward III.; was defendant in a plea concerning land; paid the various subsidies temp. Edward II.; married Matilda, a widow, in the 12th year of Edward II., in which year she paid 11s. subsidy.
5. HENRY BAKER, of Smithside in Cranbrook, paid 2s. subsidy, 1st Edward III.; died before the 20th of Edward III.
6. THOMAS BAKER, of Cranbrook, paid the subsidies; lived in or about the year A.D. 1347 to 1396; is mentioned in a suit "coram regi," 1371.
7. HENRY BAKER, of Cranbrook, paid the subsidy 1417; was defendant in a plea concerning land in the same year; and had (at least) two sons, viz., Thomas and Henry.
8. THOMAS BAKER, of Cranbrook, paid 14s. subsidy in 1419, and again in 1431.
9. HENRY BAKER, brother of last—Thomas,—paid the subsidy 1431; his will was proved at Canterbury 1477; mentions two daughters.
10. THOMAS BAKER, of Cranbrook; will dated 3rd February, 1493; proved at Canterbury 1497; married Benet, daughter of —, who was living 1504.
11. RICHARD BAKER, of Cranbrook, is mentioned in the will of his uncle (Thomas, No. 10), 1493; also Henry Baker is similarly mentioned.
12. RICHARD BAKER, of Cranbrook; will dated 7th August, 1504; proved at Canterbury 15th November, 1504.
James Baker died before his father, 1493; mentioned in will of his father, 1504.
13. RICHARD BAKER (No. 12) had two more sons, viz., Thomas

* Viz., Mr. W. Tarbutt, of Cranbrook, whose unpretending tractates on his native place's memorables, I place far above your huge and too often empty "County Histories." See also Appendix to this Introduction.

Baker, who inherited lands at Barwash, in Sussex, mentioned under the will of his grandfather (No. 10), A.D. 1493; was ancestor of the mother of JOHN SELDEN: and Robert Baker, mentioned in his father's will (No. 11), 1504; also Joane, married —, mentioned in the will of her brother, Sir John (of famous memory, as below); Elizabeth, mentioned in her grandfather's will (No. 10), 1493; and Catharine.*

These BAKERS, though thus leaving traces of being above the "commonalty" by their payment of "subsides," and by their "lands and goods" distributed in their quaint-languaged Wills, have no place in history, except in so far as the Baker motherhood of JOHN SELDEN imparts lustre to them all. But we have now reached one of the name and line who filled, and nobly, a large space in his long-drawn generation, viz., SIR JOHN BAKER, son of Richard Baker (No. 12). This Sir John Baker was successively Recorder of London, Chancellor of the Exchequer to Henry VIII., Attorney-General (1539), and Speaker to the House of Commons. LLOYD in his "State Worthies" (*s.n.*) grows almost eloquent in his memoir of him. Thus:—

"There is one of this name remarkable in every king's reign since the conquest. There is one now renowned in this: 1. For integrity, to be neither awed nor corrupted. 2. For a spirit public as nature, neither moved with particular respect, nor terminated in a private design."

Then he tells an incident wherein the "stout Knight" figured:—

"The French were so insolent in London, the 8th year of Henry 8th, that when one Williamson, a carpenter, was about to pay for two pigeons he bought, a Frenchman takes them out of his hand, saying, *They were no meat for carpenters*, but for my Lord Embassadour; who concerned himself so much in the case that he had Williamson imprisoned. SIR JOHN BAKER sued the Embassadour for the man; who answered, *That the English knave deserved to be hanged for denying anything to a Frenchman*. Whereupon Sir John replied, *You know not that you are in London*: a notable reply, considering that the city was up next day against strangers in so desperate a tumult, that none could suppress but Sir Thomas More, and none could rebuke but Sir William Kingston and Sir John Baker."

* Manning in his "Lives of the Speakers of the House of Commons" (1850), pp. 196-9, has a full but poor memoir of Sir John Baker. Incidentally he states that "a junior branch of Richard Baker, of Rushington, left an only child, Margaret, who was the mother of the learned John Seldon." *Sic*—not even so great a name spelled accurately.

Again :

"Judge Montague was the only person that durst dispute King Edward's will ; Judge Hales and Sir John Baker, the only Counsellors that durst refuse it."

Finally :

"This constant and firm resolution to stick to his duty and loyalty brought him to his grave in peace and honour ; having been a faithful counsellor and servant to Henry 8th, Edward 6th, Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth."

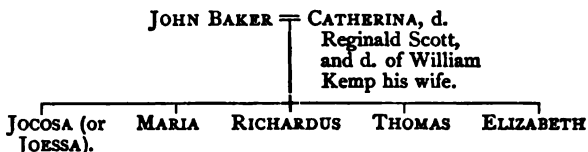
The last an inaccuracy, as he died in a few days after Elizabeth's accession.

Sir John Baker had "large possessions," but his "seat" was at Sissinghurst, near Cranbrook. He erected the now long ruinous mansion-house of Sissinghurst. He married (1) Catherine, daughter of Richard Sackville, Esq., before the year 1524, in which year she is mentioned in the will of her father. Her mother was aunt of Anne Boleyn. He married (2) Elizabeth, daughter and coheir of Thomas Dynely, relict of George Barrett. Her son, Edward Barrett, was left a silver cup, with arms, by Sir John Baker, his step-father.

Sir John Baker had issue two sons and four daughters, viz. :—

JOHN,	}	CATHARINE,
RICHARD.		MARY,
		CECILIA,
		ELIZABETH.

From reasons that have not come down, the eldest son—father of our Sir Richard—was disinherited by his father. *Certes*, Richard his brother, the second son, was in possession of Sissinghurst in 1573, in which year he was knighted by Elizabeth on occasion of a State visit and "Progress" to Sissinghurst—as told in the "Progresses" of the great Queen. Be this as it may, John Baker, eldest son of the eminent Sir John Baker, being then of London, married Catharine, daughter of REGINALD SCOTT OF SCOTT'S HALL, about twenty miles from Cranbrook, not far from Ashford. He had issue two sons and three daughters, according to Harleian MS. 840, f. 42 b :—



The "Richardus" was our Sir RICHARD BAKER. On the authority of ANTHONY-A-WOOD (from one of his daughters), RICHARD was born at the great mansion-house of Sissinghurst. The words are specific enough: "he was born in Kent, particularly [as I have been informed by his daughter [the wife of — Bury [a Scotchman], a seedsman living at the Frying Pan in Newgate Market in London], at Sissinghurst before mentioned." This seems open to doubt, unless we conclude that its possessor (RICHARD, second son, *ut supra*) was on friendly terms with his disinherited elder brother, and that the parents were on a visit at the time. His grandfather had died in 1558. He was born in 1568. Whatever lessening of estate the disinheritance of his father involved, all the circumstances seem to warrant us in assuming that Master Richard was well-born. His mother's parentage reminds us that he was allied through her to keen-visioned, strong-brained Reginald Scot, of "Witchcraft" scepticism renown—whose book is being revived as this is written.* Our first definite glimpse of him is that he was "entered a commoner of Hart Hall, Oxford, in 1584, and matriculated Michaelmas term that year as a "Kentish man born and son of a gentleman, being then in the 16th year of his age" (= birth 1568, as before). At the time "several of the family of the Scots" were in the said Hall. So writeth Anthony-a-Wood and all the authorities. One famous chamber-fellow he had in (afterwards Sir) HENRY WOTTON. He remained for three years at the University, mainly occupied, it would seem, with logic and philosophy. So again Anthony-a-Wood. But either he remained longer than the

* Prospectus and proposals of a careful reprint of this remarkable treatise reach me from my bookish friend Dr. Brinsley Nicholson, of London. May the pious scheme succeed!

alleged "three years," or he subsequently returned, inasmuch as in the FASTI there is this entry :—

Creations.

1594. On the ninth of July, being the day after the act had been finished, these following persons were actually created Master of Arts.

Rich. Baker, Esq.*

He proceeded on leaving Oxford to "one of the Inns of Court." Apparently his tarrying or "residence" there was brief; for speedily he is found "beyond the seas," and "nothing omitted by his parents to make him an accomplished person." This "travelling" and becoming a travelled gentleman (eheu! most are merely travelling, only an elect few travelled) was the *mode* of the time and onward, as WILLIAM COWPER in England and ROBERT BURNS in Scotland pungently satirized.

On his return he must have again "resided" in the Inns of Court. There followed admittance to the Court (of James). On May 17th, 1603, he was knighted at Theobalds, "at which time," the Athenæ informs us, "he lived at Highgate, near London, and was esteemed a most compleat and learned person,"—adding, by inevitable prolepsis, "the benefit of which he reaped in his old age, when his considerable estate was, thro' suretyship, very much impaired." This "suretyship" was *the* master-sorrow of his life. The thing is obscure, and probably never now will be elucidated; but the matter-of-fact seems to have been that, having married Margaret, a daughter of SIR GEORGE MAINWARING, of Ightfield, in Shropshire, he became "surety" for certain members of this family. The date of the marriage has not been ascertained; but the "suretyship" in all probability came some years subsequent. In 1620 he was High Sheriff of Oxfordshire, being then Lord of Middle Aston and of other lands therein; and, continues Wood, "if I mistake not, a justice of the peace." He had issue three sons and three daughters, viz., Thomas (who was knighted before 1638), Mainwaring, and Arthur, Cecilia, Ann, and Margaret.

* Wood also mentions this *in loco* in Athenæ (s.n.).

By 1635, at latest, he was in trouble. JOSEPH HUNTER, in his *Chorus Votum* (s.n.), cites an original letter preserved in the Exchequer from Sir Francis Cottington to the Remembrancer (17th October, 1635), desiring him to send a "Particular" of the "lands and tenements of Sir Richard Baker in co. of Oxford, as they stand seised in the King's hands for the several debts of JOHN TEMPLE, Esq., SIR RICHARD BROOK, and DANIEL GROOME, Esq., and returned to his office." In our dim light it looks extraordinary that our good Knight should have become "surety" for so many. Whether these belonged to the Mainwaring house I cannot say. From 1635 onward to his death he lay in the Fleet Prison. Contemporary and later accounts give terrible revelations of the state of this and other prisons. I like to believe that in some way or other the confinement was mitigated, and that, though held in bondage, he was able to secure certain indulgences. Thus the whole of his books must have been written in the Fleet Prison; so that he must have been allowed writing materials. Contrasting him with SIR JOHN ELIOT in the Tower, I suppose a distinction was drawn between treatment of a State prisoner and a simple debtor. I suspect that, in addition to the "surety" obligations, Sir Richard was himself in debt, perhaps in strenuous efforts to meet the former, e.g., in the Epistle-dedicatory of his "Meditations and Disquisitions" on "Seven Consolatorie Psalmes," he gratefully acknowledges the forgiveness of a "great debt" by Lord Craven. "I shall," he says, "perhaps move envy to say, Quæ te tam læta tulerunt sæcula? but for myself, I am bound to say it, who have received from your Lordship indeed a great favour, *the remission of a great debt.*"* Other epistles-dedicatory to

* William, 1st Baron and Earl of Craven, was eldest son of Sir William Craven, Lord Mayor of London. He was "much affected with military exercises from his youth, and signalized himself in Germany and the Netherlands under Henry Prince of Orange." Having gained much honour, he was on his return knighted at Newmarket, March 4th, 1606, and on the 12th of the same month raised to the degree and dignity of a Baron of the realm, by the title of Lord Craven of Hampstead-Marsall in co. Berks. In 1631 he was commander of forces sent to aid Gustavus, King of Sweden, then in arms in Germany in defence of the Protestants; and when that monarch, with Frederick, Elector-Palatine and titular King of Bohemia, marched out of Bavaria in February 1632, and came before the strong castle of Crutznack, the English volunteers by their bravery in three assaults obliged the garrison to surrender,

those of his own house—as we shall see—and to the all-potent Earl of Dorset and Mary Countess of Dorset, brought, it is to be feared, slender alleviation of either his poverty or his sorrows.*

The remainder of his life from 1635 has for landmarks only the composition and publication of his several books, as follows:—

(a) *Cato Variegatus*, or *Catoes Morall Distichs*: Translated and Paraphras'd, with variations of Expressing, in English verse. By Sr. Richard Baker, Knight. 1636. (4to.)

(b) *Meditations and Disquisitions upon the Lord's Prayer*. 1637. 3rd edit., 1638; 4th edit., 1640. (4to.)

(c) *Translation of Letters of M. Balsac*: 4 Pts. 1638. (8vo.)

(d) *Meditations and Disquisitions upon the Seven Psalmes of David*, commonly called the *Penitentiall Psalmes*. 1639. (4to.)

(e) *Meditations and Disquisitions upon Seven Consolatorie Psalmes of David*. 1640. (4to.)

(f) *Meditations and Disquisitions upon the First Psalm of David*. 1640. (4to.)

(g) *An Apologie for Lay-Mens Writing on Divinity*. With a short Meditation upon the Fall of Lucifer. 1641. (18mo.)

(h) *Meditations and Motives for Prayer upon the Seaven dayes of the Week*. 1641-2. (18mo.)

(i) His "*Chronicle*:" 1st edit., 1641; 2nd, 1653; 3rd, 1660; 4th, 1665; 5th, 1670; 6th, 1674; 7th, 1679; 8th, 1684; 9th, 1696; 10th, 1730; 11th, 1733. (folios.)

and the capitulation was signed by Lord Craven and Boulin, Quarter-master General of the King of Sweden's army. Lord Craven was wounded in the assaults, and coming into the King of Sweden's presence, was told by him, "He adventured so desperately, he bid his younger brother fair play for his estates." Afterwards he was sent to aid the Elector-Palatine, who having besieged Linaegia in 1637, a battle ensued, wherein the Emperor's army being victorious, the Elector with difficulty escaped by flight, and his helpers, Prince Rupert and Lord Craven, were taken prisoners. Obtaining his liberty, he went into the service of the States of Holland, under the Prince of Orange, where he remained until the restoration of Charles II. Though he did not personally serve Charles I., he sent him "considerable supplies," as Charles II. admitted by advancing him to the higher degree of Viscount Craven of Uffington in the same co. of Berks, and Earl Craven of Craven in Yorkshire. The "Parliament" pronounced inevitably his estates forfeited, though it was hesitatingly done. All were "restored" at the Restoration. To the last he was a soldier. He lived to so long as April 9th, 1697, dying then aged 88 years and 10 months. These old warriors had the "fear of God" before them, and so the Epistle-dedicatory of Sir Richard Baker was quite in keeping.

* The Earl of Dorset needs no annotation. He was *the* Dorset of History and of Clarendon. His wife Mary, daughter and heiress of Sir George Curzon, of Croxhall, in co. Derby, Knight, is also historical. By universal testimony she was a lady "accomplished in all virtues, and of excellent judgment." She had the educational custody of the royal children. I suppose she stands alone as the only woman ever decreed by the Houses of Lords and Commons, a public funeral. This took place on 3rd September, 1645.

(j) Translation of "Discourses upon Corn. Tacitus." By Malvezzi. 1642. (folio.)

Posthumously published.

(k) *Theatrum Redivivum*, or The Theatre Vindicated by Sir Richard Baker, in answer to Mr. Pryn's *Historio-Mastix*. Wherein his groundless Assertions against Stage-Plays are discovered, his mistaken Allegations of the *Fathers* manifested, as also what he calls his *Reasons*, to be nothing but his Passions. 1662. (12mo.)

This is the same book that was re-issued with a new title-page in 1670, entitled, "*Theatrum Triumphans*," though Allibone and the Bibliographers describe them as distinct works.*

(l) Besides these his published works, there is preserved in Sloane MSS., No. 881, an unpublished MS. by him. It is lettered on the back

Baker
on
Honour.

Its title-page thus runs:—Honour | Discours'd of | in the | Theory | of
it, and the | Practice | with | Directions | for a | Prudent Conduct; |
on Occurrences of | Incivility; | and | Civility.

There is a brief epistle-dedicatory, the autograph signature to which has been facsimiled beneath the portrait for us:—

To the Right Reverend Father in God, Henry
Lord Bishop of London.

My Lord!

In regard this Discourse Treats of the Gentleman, and the Christian; of the Humanity, Sweetnesse, and Generosity, inseparable from great and exalted Minds; the Presumption of sending it abroad under your Lordship's Patronage may (possibly) appear the more excusable in

My Lord
Yor Lo^{ps} most Dutyfull, and
Obedient Servant
RICHARD BAKER.†

Of these, *d*, *e*, *f* form the present Reprint, being the whole of his "Meditations and Disquisitions" on the Psalms. Before noticing them, it may be acceptable to pause for a

* Allibone's huge "Dictionary of British and American Authors" is an extremely illiterate and unworthy book, mainly made up from Library and booksellers' catalogues and the like, rarely from actual knowledge of the books. It is useful in a way, but scarcely ever to be trusted: full where not required, and empty where it ought to be full. He blunders over Baker's Psalm books, misreading special title-pages prefixed to "Psalm li" and "The Three last Psalmes," in the treatise on "The Penitential Psalmes;" vide pp. 167 and 225 of this reprint. The present volume includes all he wrote and published on Psalms.

† I hope to utilize this MS. in annotating Hobys "Courtier." It is not impossible that the Publisher of the present volume may print it in whole or part for special lovers of our elder worthies.

little over the others. The first, "*Cato Variiegatus*" (a), is in my judgment a delightful and suggestive book. It has fallen out of sight, and on its rare chance-occurrences fetches a large price. It combines all the venerable Author's characteristics of ripe learning, fine thinking, gleaming wit, and quaint speech. I think I do not err in believing that selected specimens of these "Distichs," or couplets, will be welcome to all who care for his "Psalmes." Accordingly I shall give a good century of them. They will reward study. They are not to be merely glanced at and done with.

In his Epistle to the Reader in apologizing for his "Peri-phrases" (Quarles's word also, contemporaneously,) and "Paraphrases" he maintains his liberty in that, while he may be censured to have used it too liberally, "yet so long as *Sensus est in tuto*, and nothing is said but what is drawn *E potentia verborum*," he expects "to be excused at least if not commended." Sooth to say, the more literal translations are "bare grain," while the "paraphrases or collateral conceits" are in not a few instances memorable and weighty. He thus pleasantly explains his rule: "all tend to the same sence; and the direct translations are sent before, as set alwayes next the Latine," and then "they are but after the fashion of young men; who weare thin cloaths in cold winter, but have good warm waste-cotes vnder them, and some men, may bee of that disposition, to take as much delight in the conceit of the Expressing as in the expressing of the conceit." Finally: "Some men will perhaps say; Here is variety indeed, but one well done were better than all: what good doth choice where All is Refuse stuffe? It is true; but let this man bring better stufes out of his ware-house, and then, let these be thrown away: till then, he may content himselfe with these: they may keepe him warme though not make him fine. And seeing there is variety of Iudgements, it is not unfit to tender them variety of expressions: some may take better with one Iudgement, some with another, and oftentimes one expressing gives lustre to another, and makes the reason which lay hid before, to looke abroad; which is not yet another thing but the same thing in another light: and lastly, being Precepts of Morality,

they cannot have too many allurements. Howsoever it be, the worke I am sure is such as need not repent me of one moneth spent in writing it; nor thee, whosoever thou art, of one houre spent in reading it." These modest apologies (in the old sense) fittingly introduce our String of Pearls from the book. The headings are ours.

1. *Public Worship.*

God's outward worship, must not be neglected;
But 'tis the inward that is most respected.

2. *Sleep.*

Sleepe not too much : vices will soone be dead
If with the milke of slothe they be not fed.
Not sleepe, but sleeping much, must be withstood :
Much resting makes men restie to all good.
Sleepe's entertainment, must be order'd thus :
Not we to sleepe goe, but sleepe come to us.
Sleepe is both Prodigal's and Miser's crime :
It hoords yet wasts, the chiefest treasure, Time.
Much Sleepe is a betraying Vertue's ward :
It ties the Senses' hands which are her guard.
Much Opium doth the Senses overcome :
And what is sleepe but Nature's opium ?
Sleeping is as the oyle of our Life's lampe :
Little refreshes ; too much, makes a dampe.

3. *The Tongue.*

The Tongue hath this one rare yet common notion :
It Vertue shewes no lesse in Rest than Motion.
The stronger the Tongue is, the man's the weaker :
Hee that can hold his tongue, is the best speaker.
The Tongue, both stirres Debate and makes it cease :
He holds peace best that best can hold his peace.
The Tongue may thus be encrease or decrease ;
Rul'de well, it makes an angell ; ill, a beast.

4. *Luxury.*

Forbeare things hurtfull, though thou hold them deere ;
Better hard fare than surfet with good cheere.
Not Gold if over weight worth keeping thinke :
Better goe empty, safe, than laden, sinke.

5. *Case being altered, alters the case.*

Be gentle or severe, as cause may be :
To change with time is wise men's constancy.

To be now sharpe, now gentle, is no crime :
 Wisdome makes men chamelions of time.

6.

Word-combats.

Words against wordy men, thou must not vse ;
 That's their owne weapon ; thou must wisdom chuse.
 Strive not of talking men, the day to get :
 Least it be said, Two parrats are well met.
 To strive to put downe men of words, is vaine :
 For most have tongue at will, but few have braine.

7.

Spendthrift Kindness.

Th' account betweene thy friends and thee, so cast :
 Thou feast not them, and bring thyselfe to fast.
 Be friend to others, but thy owne friend, first :
 The kinde foole, of all kindes of fooles, is worst.

8.

Gossips.

Spread no reports, whatever thy words are :
 No text so cleare but that a glosse may marre.

9.

Self-estimate.

When thou art prais'd, be Iudge thyselfe thereto :
 Thou better knowst thyselfe than others doe.
 When men praise thee, doe thou judge them, and show
 Whether they thee, or thou them, better know.

10.

Conscience.

Whether men talke aloud, or soft and still :
 What is't to thee, if thou have done no ill ?
 Who doubts men's whispering talk, shew themselves vicious :
 'Tis guiltinesse of minde makes men suspitious.
 Care not what men betweene them whispering be,
 So long as Conscience whispers not to thee.

11.

Fore-think.

When skies are cleere, take heed of overcast :
 Our life, like wine, hath all the lees at last.

12.

Life's uncertainty.

Since all are mortall, what more vaine can be
 Than hope to bury them may bury thee ?
 What contract canst thou make with Death, that he
 Should serve his writs on others, and spare thee ?
 It is not Hope, but wan hope, to surmize
 That thou shalt live to close another's eyes.
 Since all our lives are brittle glass and weake,
 What reason thine should hold, and others breake ?

Thinke not thyself from Death the more at rest
 For being young ; 'tis greene fruit Death loves best.
 The lives of men seeme in two seas to swimme :
 Death comes to young folkes, and old goe to him.
 Which may we count to Death the greater haster,
 The old hath lesse to goe, the young runne faster.
 Old folkes so gastly are, and looke so grimme,
 That Death feares them as much as they feare him.

13. *Humble Gift.*
 When a poore friend for some small thing makes shift,
 Looke on the giver's minde, not on the gift.
14. *Naked at both ends of life.*
 We came into the world without a clout,
 And in as poore a pickle we goe out.
 Where life's both ends are in so meane degree,
 What matter is't, how meane the middle be ?
15. *Fear not dying.*
 Betimes thinke on thy last end, and be steady ;
 He that feares dying is halfe dead allready.
 Feare not life's last ; each day Death cuts our skore ;
 And yet not felt : the last will doe no more.
16. *Promise-breaking.*
 Thy Promise breaking is the Truth's denying ;
 And is but a more solid kinde of lying.
17. *Biter bitten.*
 When one pretends love that hath no such thought,
 Doe thou the like : so Dottrels must be caught.
18. *Flatteries.*
 In fawning words, think not true meaning straight :
 What good doe trapps vnlesse they have a baite ?
19. *Thrift and Cost.*
 Account no oddes between things base and deere :
 A gilt or wooden dish, make both no cheere.
20. *Life's frailty.*
 So fraile is life, dangers so manifold,
 That new dayes are but scape-goats of the old.
 What's life, or health ? what's beauty, strength, or breath ?
 All is but interest of our debt to death.
 Each day that's liv'd is gain'd : poore gaine, God wot,
 That makes one so much poorer as is got.
 If we count that day gayn'd which we have past,
 That's lost that's past ; and so that's gain'd that's lost.

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21. *Strife.*
 Not always strive with friends, thy force to show :
 'Tis victory sometimes to take a blow.
 'Tis Mastery sometimes to take a Fall :
 Hee knowes no manners that still takes the wall.
22. *Part for Whole.*
 Hee's no good Husbandman that will mislike
 To sowe a pynte where he may reape a strike.
23. *Economy.*
 As one hand brings in, th' other must lay up ;
 Else thou mayst have to dyne, but not to sup.
24. *Ostentation.*
 In keeping Christmas something may be spent,
 But not to make the whole year after, Lent.
 Thy bounty may have leave sometimes to roame,
 But still remember, Love beginnes at home.
25. *Charities.*
 Let Vertue's lustre even to strangers show thee :
 Is't not a glory that more love than know thee?
26. *Foreboding.*
 Leave feare of Death ; who can have merry heart,
 As long as Feare stands brandishing Death's dart ?
27. *Ambition.*
 Be not aspiring, nor too lofty flie ;
 No falls so dangerous as those from high.
 Seeke not extremes ; 'tis the conceit of Pride
 To thinke it never Flud without Spring-tide.
28. *Confidences.*
 Why shouldst thou make that knowne, which 'tis too much
 Thou knowst thyselfe ? sores are not fit to touch.
 Blaze not abroad to others thine owne evill :
 This were to light a candle to the Devill.
29. *Reckoning.*
 Thinke not that sinnes once done are gone and past :
 Time is a Blab, and will tell all at last.
30. *Little Men.*
 Skorne not the strength of men of little size ;
 Whom Nature makes lesse strong, she make more wise.
 Slight not small statures ; 'tis not said in vaine,
 The lesser head, the better is the braine.
 Marke Nature's course, and you shall finde she puts
 Her choicest wine in runlets, not in butts.

Despise not little men ; 'tis Nature's guise
 To give the greater sight to lesser eyes.
 Nature is wise, and gives not all to one ;
 To some more braine, to others greater bone.
 Marke inward worth, and you shall find it then
 That lesser bodies make not lesser men.

31. *Retreat not Defeat.* ("Hudibras" in the second anticipated.)

Finding thyself too weak, sound a retreat :
 We see the conquer'd oft the conquerors beat.
 To give ground when there's odds, never disdain :
 He that yeelds now may fight againe, and gaine.
 Who yeeld, though loose the day, yet winne the time,
 Flee but to fight againe ; fall but to climbe.

32. *Forgotten Words.*

He erres that words of brabbles past, remembers ;
 This is to stirre old coales, rak'd up in embers.

33. *Simple Living.*

Vse sparingly thy goods : goods are as oakes ;
 Long time in growing, cut down with few strokes.
 Spend sparingly : let something be preservd :
 No means can serve where no mean is observd.

34. *Wise Folly.*

To be a Foole sometimes, doe not despise :
 A folly counterfeit is oft most wise.
 Folly sometimes comes out of Wisdome's schoole :
 None but wise men can counterfeit a foole.
 Wisdome is like the sunne, shines when she list ;
 And when she pleases, hides her in a mist.
 This we may learne in Observation's schooles :
 Fooles cannot be wise men, wise men can fooles.
 In stinting wisdome greatest wisdome lies :
 No man is ever wise that's over-wise.
 If time and place be not before his eyes,
 There may be wisdome, yet the man not wise.
 He onely wisdome may be said to have,
 That holds it as a lord, not as a slave.
 I bid not be a foole, but seem to be,
 When cause requires it : else thou art not free.

35. *Chatterers.*

Credit not awayes him tels this or that :
 His credit might be more if less his chat.

Credit not alwayes them that talk a vye :
How can their tongues but lye that never lye ?

36.

Drunkard.

What is much drinke but the Braine's inundation ?
Are not men mad that mak't a recreation ?

37.

Opportunity.

To let time slip is a reverseless crime :
You may have time againe, but not the time.

38.

Knowledge.

To fill thy mind with precepts, labour most ;
For without learning, life is but Death's ghost.

39.

Reality.

Care what thou dost ; care not what's said of thee :
Virtue itself is not from slander free.

40.

Sloth.

Fly Sloth, which is a calme worse than a storme ;
And doth our leaking ship of life more harme.

Fly Sloth, which is to life an irksome guest :
It takes so much rest that it takes no rest.

Fly Sloth, which body fires and mind benumnes :
It is a taste of death before Death comes.

41.

Bounty during Life.

When Death now threats to take thy goods from thee,
Doe thou take them from Death, and bounteous be.

"What I gave that I have : " one wrote on's grave :
Ther old and rich, give, that thou still mayst have.

42.

Changed Circumstances.

If Fortune give thee lesse than she hath done ;
Then make lesse fire, and walk more in the sunne.

If Fortune poure upon thee all her gall,
Yet Patience hath a spleene will hold it all.

Why should the change of fortune make thee pale ?
Thou dost but leave the hill to walk i' th' vale.

If Fortune of her anker have thee ridde,
Patience can make an anker of a thridde.

43.

Witnessing.

If thou a theft know, let it be reveal'd :
A theefe's concealour is a theefe conceal'd.

44.

Death.

Soule brought a bed of body, and deliver'd
Is death : Is not hee that feares thee white-liver'd ?

45. *Rich Beggars.*
It need not riddle be whereat to stagger ;
A man may be a rich man, yet a beggar.
46. *Intellectual Wealth.*
If Nature's treasures thou desire to finde,
Search not the mines of India, but the mind.
47. *Health.*
To gather riches doe not hazard health ;
For truth to say, Health is the wealth of wealth.
48. *Choosing Friends.*
In choosing of a friend, observe but this :
Regard not what hee hath, but what hee is.
Thou must to goodnesse, not to goods, attend ;
Or else thou mayst have friends, but not a friend.
A faithfull friende is best known by this marke :
He's lesse discern'd in th' light than in th' darke.
When thou would'st finde a friend to stick unto,
Not mannours make the man, but mannours do.
To know a friend that's more in heart than lips,
Marke him not in the sunne, but in th' eclips.
Friendship and wealth have severall works to do ;
Friendship makes two one, and wealth makes one two.
A reall friend a cannon cannot batter ;
With nom'nall friends, a squib's a per'lous matter.
49. *Use, not Hoard.*
Use that thou hast ; be not thy monie's slave :
What use to have, if not use what you have ?
Use that thou hast, and long not after more :
What good doth store, if only kept in store ?
50. *Self-indulgence in Drinking.*
Drinke but in temper : pleasure without measure
Brings thee at last to measure without pleasure.
Drinke not too much : what man that were not vaine
Would broach his mouth to set a-tylt his braine ?
Drinke not too much : such drinking will in fyne
Have a worse skore than paying for the wine.
51. *Envy.*
What needs the moone with envy looke so pale ?
Shee's great to stars, though to the sunne she's small.
All Fortune's oddes is by Comparison's eye :
Looke up or downe, and thou art low or high.

Climbe not too high, least thou endanger'd be :
Low boughes are strong, but weake at top o' th' tree.

52.

Comparative Loves.

The love is great, when all away is swept ;
Yet there are some things better lost than kept.
It needs must greue to be with losses crost ;
Yet what is lost for friends, is never lost.

53.

Long-life : life-long.

While men their daies of life are multiplying,
They live not longer, but are longer dying.
How can we reckon upon life's extent
That know not what we have till all be spent ?

54.

Not slaves, but men.

When for thy use thou buyest servants, then
Though slaves thou call them, yet know they are men.

In all likelihood, other readers of "Cato Variegatus" would have made other selections, but these are fairly representative of the whole. I very much mistake if many of these "picked and packed" words and sentences do not get into some elect memories. I have the more readily quoted fully, because these books on the "Psalms," now reprinted, furnish kindred condensed and felicitous things (especially on the First Psalm), though not versified.

The "Apologie for Lay-Mens Writing on Divinity" well deserves republication in these days of revived sacerdotal-clericalism, whereby the (so-called) "laity" are marked off with a no less offensive than unscriptural echoing of the old utterance, "Stand by thyself, come not near to me ; for I am holier than thou" (Isa. lxxv. 5). Evidently his "Meditations and Disquisitions" had been challenged as an intrusion.

The "Apologie" is dedicated "To my worthy much honored cosen Sr John Baker of Sissingherst in the co. of Kent." He is very meek and lowly in his address—*e.g.*, "Sir, I cannot but very much honour you, as being a flourishing branch of that tree of which I am but a withered bough" . . . "whereof I have resentment in a very great degree"—resentment having then the sense of "grateful feeling" (as in Barrow, "That thanksgiving whereby we should express an affectionate *resentment* of our obligation to him"—Sermon 6, on Prayer).

The treatise thus effectively opens: "I am very tender to speak on an argument that may any way be drawne to trench upon the cleargie, whose calling I reverence and whose person I respect *tanquam angelos Dei* ; but who can bee patient to heare the ignorant murmuring of some men, who as though they would cloyster up God's Spirit and not suffer it *spirare ubi vult*, to breathe where it listeth, prohibiteth laymen wholly from handling matters of divinity, and as if they reckoned them in the number of those of whom God said, 'What hast thou to doe to take mine ordinances in thy mouth?'" Having marshalled facts and arguments, he thus expostulates: "For men that allow laymen to read, and yet deny them to write, what can be conceived more incongruous? much like as if they would allow men to marry, and not allow them to have children; or if to have children, yet not to be legitimate: for what is this writing but as it were the issue and offspring of their reading? Not that every one that reads must presently be a writer, no more than any one that marries of necessity hath children; but that where the one is lawfully permitted, the other cannot reasonably be denied."

There is very considerable learning and acumen in the "Apologie," and jets of humour reveal that "stone walls," in the author's case, did "no prison make,"—did not even begloom his spirit.

His "Chronicle of the Kings of England" with every deduction supplied a *desideratum*. Granted that the boast of its Epistle to the Reader, that it had been "collected with so great care and diligence that if all other of our chronicles were lost, this only would be sufficient to inform posterity of all passages memorable or worthy to be known," must be read with a good many grains of salt. Nevertheless, it is substantially a good, sound, manly, historical book. All honour to JOSEPH ADDISON that he made the "Chronicle" beloved of Sir Roger de Coverley, and the source of his "many observations." Thumbled and dog-eared copies of the old folios are still to be met with in old manor-houses, and well-preserved ones in "the stately homes of England." *Pace* BLOUNT and BISHOP NICHOLSON—both dry as any "remainder biscuit," I promise the student-reader reward if

he turn to the "Chronicle." I do not know that I care to recommend the later editions, with continuations by SIR THOMAS CLARGES and Phillips (Milton's nephew).

The posthumously-published "*Theatrum Redivivum*" is incomparably the most scholarly and best-reasoned "Apology" for the "Theatre" extant. It goes without saying that Prynne's pseudo-learning is scattered as so much chaff. The touch is light, occasionally half-playful, but drawing blood every time. It must, however, be conceded that while unanswerable logically and theoretically, it still remains true that it demands an ideal, not the actual "Theatre," to win our assent or acceptance. One *bit* alone—for it were idle to traverse the argument *pro* and *con*—strikes me as demanding quotation, viz., an incidental vindication of two great Shakespearean actors, and one of them—Burbage—in all probability the painter of the Chandos portrait of Shakespeare. He thus writes of scurrility: "He [Prynne] would make us believe that all the attractive power of Plays, to draw Beholders, is merely for scurrility: as if it were no Play, at least no pleasing Play, without it. Whereas besides his prejudice, he may be made to confess his ignorance; for let him try it when he will, and come himself upon the stage, with all the scurrility of the *Wife of Bath*, with all the ribaldry of Poggius or Boccace, yet I dare affirm he shall never give that content to Beholders as honest Tarlton did, though he said never a word. And what scurrility was ever heard to come from the mouth of the two actors of our time, Allen [Alleyne] and Burbadge? yet what Plays were ever so pleasing as where these parts had the great part? For it is not the scurrility and ribaldry that gives the contentment, as he foolishly imagines and falsely suggests, but it is the Ingeniousness of the Speech when it is fitted to the person, and the gracefulness of the action when it is fitted to the speech; and therefore a Play read hath not half the pleasure of a Play acted; for though it have the pleasure of ingenious speeches, yet it wants the pleasure of graceful action; and we may well acknowledge that graceful action is the greatest pleasure of a Play, seeing it is the greatest pleasure of the art of pleasure, Rhetorick" (pp. 34-5).

The translations of Balsac (*c*) and of Malvezzi (*j*) were mere hack-work.

Turning now to the "Meditations and Disquisitions" on various of the Psalms, and associating therewith his similar "Meditations and Disquisitions on the Lord's Prayer," and "Meditations and Motives for Prayer upon the Seven dayes of the Week" (*i*)—the last, I think, having been earlier issued, judging by a reference in the Epistle of the "Meditations and Motives"—as onward—as "Soliloquy of the Soul, or a Pillar of Thoughts," 1641, (12mo), recorded by Wood, but which I have not been fortunate enough to meet with—I must remark, in the outset, that the chief value of all these books lies in their goodness or spirituality. There is learning well in hand; there is evidence of varied culture; there is now and again weighty thought; there is oftener still vivid illumination of a divine sentence flashing into its very heart; there is quaint playing with words and deft phrasing; but *the* distinctive signet of the whole of these "Meditations and Disquisitions" is their savour of godliness, their fragrance of prayerfulness, their music of thankfulness, their pathetic yearning and aspiration. For mass of thought, for unexpected things, for striking suggestiveness, for occasional beauty of style, I would not compare any of the present books with another layman and knight's, SIR JOHN HAYWARD. It has always been a mystery to me that *his* matterful and gracious religious books have never been reprinted modernly. But without proverbially "odious comparisons," there need be no reserve in commending these "Meditations and Disquisitions" to the like-minded and like-hearted. I cannot suppose any reading them without spiritual excitement and incitement.

Specifically, I place the "Meditations and Disquisitions on the First Psalm" in the fore-front. The thought is weightier, the exposition closer, the style sinewier, the *memorabilia* plentier in this than in any of the others.

It seems only right to give my readers the benefit of my familiarity with this particular portion of these "Meditations and Disquisitions." Take, then, these few inevitably-marked things, from the commencement forward:—

1. *Negatives.*

"The first godliness that ever was,—that is, the first commandment of God,—was delivered to our first parents in a negative: 'Of the tree of good and evil ye shall not eat;' and if they had well observed this negative, they should never have sinned in any affirmative." . . . "Justly, therefore, the Prophet begins his godliness here with negatives, seeing negatives at first began all godliness" (p. 6).

2. *Choice by rejecting.*

"Thus as God directed Samuel to elect by rejecting, so David directs us here to choose by refusing; and this is a cause, also, that makes negatives, in many cases, so much in request" (p. 8).

3. *"Strange marks."*

"Are not there, in this case, strange marks? As though we should know a godly man by the posture of his body; or as if a godly man should neither walk, nor stand, nor sit." . . . "But they are not the postures that are here blamed, but the impostures" (pp. 9, 10).

4. *The three stages.*

"To *walk* in the counsel of the ungodly, what is it but the act of sin? and to *stand* in the way of sinners, what is it but the custom of sin? and to *sit* in the chair of scorers, what is it but to take a pride in sin?" (p. 15).

5. *Encrease.*

"Whilst nearness works by addition, and continuance by multiplication, the standing in the way of sinners, as gathering heat by both, must needs break forth at last into violent flames of sinning" (p. 17).

6. *Woman is Man.*

"But why would the Prophet say, 'Blessed is the man,' as though blessedness was entailed to heirs male, or as though the law of God were like the law Salic of France, excluding women from the kingdom of heaven? for else he should rather have said, 'Blessed is every man or woman,' and not only say, 'Blessed is the man.' But is it not that David knew better the extent of his words than to be so superfluous; for ever since the time of which Moses saith, 'God made man; male and female, created he them,' women have had as good right to the word as men, though it pass in their name" (p. 19).

7. *Proper Marks.*

"The Prophet therefore stays not here, but proceeds and hastens to the affirmative marks; for they indeed are the proper characters of a godly man; they are never found but in him, and in him they are ever found" (p. 20).

8. *Delight.*

"The Prophet requires not a godliness that bars us of delight; he requires only a godliness that rectifies our delight" (p. 21).

9. *Delight in God.*

"In presence of this, all other delights do lose their light ; in balance with this, all other delights are found to be light" (p. 24).

10. *God's Law.*

"This is not a law where the weakest goes to the wall, but the law is a wall to the weakest ; the delighting in this law is not a going to law, but a law to our going ; . . . and it is so far from making us to become enemies to our neighbours, that it makes us neighbours to our enemies" (p. 26).

11. *Preparative.*

"A good preparative, and but a preparative, to Divine contemplation ; it might serve to strew branches in the way, but not to cry Hosanna" (p. 27).

12. *Believers compared to a Tree.*

"Will the Prophet serve us thus,—make us take such pains for godliness, and keep us all this while in hand, that by being godly we shall be happy, and now bring us to no better a happiness than to be like a tree ?" . . . "Of such good qualities we shall find so many in a tree, that happiness may think itself happy to be compared to it ; for was it not a tree that bore the fruit of life in the Garden of Eden ? was it not a tree that bore the Lord of life in the field of Golgotha ?" (p. 37).

13. *Happiness of Heaven.*

"Seeing it consists of parts in number innumerable, in magnitude infinite, in continuance eternal, what man of art, what art of man, can now come near it ?" (p. 43).

14. *Eternal Happiness.*

"What by the time ? when time is no more ; for time is but the measure of motion and mutation, but happiness hath nothing to do with these, and therefore nothing to do with time ; her time is eternity" (p. 44).

15. *Blessings and being blessed.*

"There is great difference between having blessings and being blessed." . . . "Such things may entitle man *benedicti*, perhaps, but not *beati*" (p. 48).

16. *Temporary Prosperity.*

"What is their present possession but possession of the present ?" (p. 63).

17. *Chaff.*

"The wind hath no such meaning towards the chaff : it comes not to exercise it, but to vex it ; it makes it not a traveller, but a vagabond ; for if it but happen to light anywhere, the least air that moves removes

it again : the east wind drives it forward, the west wind turns it backward, the north wind crosseth them both, that the poor chaff hath no standing' but to stand amazed ; it is held up but by contrary motions ; it is of all hands, under the hand of violence ; it hath no natural rest but as it is natural to it never to rest ; it must be somewhere, yet it can be nowhere ; it hath a place, but no mansion ; a being, but no abiding ; no reposing but while the wind is weary ; no resting but till the air be up and ready ; for as long as the air is an element, and hath to do in the world, there is no hope for the miserable chaff to be ever quiet " (p. 72).

18. *Gracious Alms.*

"The giving of a small mite will have no small might in it" (p. 89).

These must suffice as foretastes of the "spoils" to be gathered in the vigilant reading of this Worthy.

I do not deem it expedient similarly to record in this Introduction my margin-markings in the other "Meditations and Disquisitions." Sooth to say, they are more "Meditations" than "Disquisitions," while it is in his excursive and discursive "Disquisitions" that he most of all excels. In his "Meditations" he is rather apt to say things than have things to say. Still, even in the most personal "Meditations" and self-application of the Psalmist's confessions and penitences, aspirations and humiliations, there gleam out fine things. Only very rarely does the reader need to query, yet now and then he will ; e.g., "if he [the believer] ever be in darkness, he shall ever be in darkness" (p. 29) : and "though a wicked man will be counterfeiting to be godly, yet it was never known that a godly man would counterfeit to be wicked" (p. 67). Further : "It may perhaps be true of the angels, in whose mouths we know of nothing there is continually, but Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth" (p. 360). The first is out and out false. Many a true child of God knows the terrors and the sorrows of walking in darkness with "no light," and yet emerges from that darkness. Even our Divine Redeemer knew it when He cried, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" The second is mournfully inaccurate. St. Peter was a "godly man," and yet when he went in and "sat among *them*"—the enemies of Christ—and by "oaths and curses" denied Him, how did he "counterfeit to be wicked"? And alas,

alas, so superficial is our transformation, and so common our conformation to the world, that too many "counterfeit to be wicked," and are recreant to their profession. The third (along with the like popular idea of the occupation of the redeemed in heaven) has done more perhaps to *monotonize* conceptions of the state of glory than almost anything else. Plainly it was only the occupation of the heavenly hosts—angelical and human—at the particular time of St. John's vision. Had he returned half an hour after, doubtless he had seen them differently engaged; and so throughout. One ought to lose no opportunity of correcting such nonsense.

"The "Meditations and Disquisitions" on the Lord's Prayer had the following letter prefixed to it:—

"To my loving and learned friend and sometime com-pupil at

"Oxford, Sr. Richard Baker, Knight.

"Sir,

"I conceive that you have been pleased, out of our ancient friendship (which was first and is ever best elemented in an Academy), and not out of any valuation of my poore judgment, to communicate unto me your Divine Meditations upon the Lord's Prayer in some several sheetes, which have given me true taste of the whole; wherein I must needs shewe and much admire the very Charity of your Stile, which seemeth unto me to have not a little of the African idea of St. Augustine's age; full of sweet Raptures and of researching conceipts; nothing borrowed, nothing vulgar, and yet all flowing from you (I know not how) with a certaine equall facility. So as I see your worldly troubles have been but Pressing-yrans to your heavenly cogitations. Good sir, let not any modesty of your nature, let not any obscurity of your fortune, smother such an excellent employment of your erudition and zeale: for it as a work of light, and not of darkness. And thus wishing you long health, that can use it so well, I remain,

"Your pious friend, to love and serve you,

"HENRY WOTTON."

THOMAS FULLER says of it (in his "Worthies"), "He wrote an Exposition on the Lord's Prayer, which is coieval with the best comments which professed divines have written on that subject."

His "Meditations and Motives for Prayer upon the Seaven days of the Week" is thinner in its thinking, but is interpenetrated with emotion and devotion. The appended

"Disquisition" on Lucifer is disappointing. The Epistle-dedicatory is characteristic, and worthy of preservation here :—

"To my much honoured the virtuous Lady Baker, wife of Sir John Baker, of Sissingherst, in Kent, Bart.

"Madam,

"There are many causes that move me to present this Treatise to your Ladiship. You are the wife of that noble gentleman who is the ornament of our Family. You are the daughter of that worthy Knight to whom, while he lived, I was exceeding beholding ; but more than both these, you are a Lady of so great Devotion that the world takes notice of it in a high degree ; a rare thing in Ladies of this age, who are commonly noted for no defect more than for excesse of vanitie. This especially makes mee conceive that a treatise of this nature will not bee displeasing to you : for though you have many godly bookes for the exercise of your pious meditations ; yet of this argument perhaps not any ; or if you have, yet vanitie oftentimes makes a greater appetite, and change of labours is a kinde of refreshing. The booke came once abroad into the world before, but was then so little that it was not fit to goe to some. It is now growne so great that it is able to doe a good daye's worke, or rather if your Ladiship please to entertaine it, will do you service every day of the weeke ; and will helpe to set you forward in His service who is the Ancient of Dayes ; and will at last turne all dayes into one daye that never shall have night. And seeing it is the employing of the short dayes here, that must make the long day happie ; it is no lesse wisdome than vertue in your Ladiship that you so piously employ them to that end, and it will be no small service in him. that shall adde but the least graine of furtherance to your doing it. Whatsoever it is, I entreat your Ladiship to account it as coming from him who is no lesse in true affection than in profession

"Your humble Servant,

"RICHARD BAKER."

Surely it is a touching picture that is called up to us in this "decayed" Knight of "gentle blood," and nurture and culture, as a prisoner of nearly ten years in "Fleet Street," occupying himself with such hallowed "Meditations and Disquisitions," with not slightest word of murmuring or fretfulness or blame of ill-willers. It is so far a relief to know that such a man as SIR HENRY WOTTON held true to him ; better still, that Dr. THOMAS FULLER sought him out, as we learn by these golden words in his "Worthies" (*s.n.*) : "His youth he spent in learning, the benefit whereof he reaped in his old age, when his estate through suretyship (*as I have heard him complain*) was very much

impaired. But God may smile on them on whom the world doth frown; whereof his pious old age was a memorable instance, when the storm on his estate forced him to fly for shelter to his studies and devotions."

To me the very mistakes in Bible names and references that the Editor of this collection has had to correct are tremulous with pathos, witnessing as they do to "memory" weakened under his white hairs. The use of the Vulgate—which he very often translates from and builds on—I cannot explain. One thing is clear, he was at no loss for books. Bishop Hacket tells that Archbishop Williams bought his library for £500—equivalent to £2,500 to-day.

Anthony-a-Wood is as nearly sympathetic as his nature would allow, on the close of all: "At length, after he had undergone many cares and troubles in this world, he departed this mortal life in the prison called Fleet, in London, on the 18th day of Feb., 1644, and on the day following was buried about the middle of the south isle joyning to S. Bridget's, commonly called S. Bride's Church, near Fleet Street in London." He left a widow and all his sons and daughters, as herein enumerated, behind him. The widow, it is believed, re-married. It needeth not that I dwell on either her or the children.

And now with relation to this reprint of these old books or selected Psalms of David—I wish it to be understood (because of an inadvertent note at page 303, where I am called Editor) that I am in no way whatever responsible for the editing and reproduction, as I have no claim to any honour that may be won by such. I have read every word from beginning to end. I could not find the time to collate with the original texts; but it seems to me an honest piece of literary work. Personally, I might not have translated some of the Latin quotations and words as the Editor has done, nor given some of his explanations in the notes; but looking at the work broadly, I think the Publisher must be pronounced fortunate in his Editor.

I place below certain words that have been overlooked; and seeing that a large number of others are noted and explained, I venture to hope these will not be thought super-

fluous.* I also add to these a very few errata that have caught my eye.†

May these fine old books enter on a new lease of useful-

- Page 7, line 26, "meet with *ruhs*" = obstacles. So page 128, line 27; page 311, line 10 from bottom.
- " 16, line 17, "*shouldered*" = shoved with the shoulder—a favourite word with Bp. Hall and John Marston.
- " 19, line 6, "*snake*" = our "sneak."
- " 27, line 6, "*leavings*" = falsehoods.
- " 34, line 20, "*punctual*" = exact, exacting; line 35, "*scandal*" = stumbling-stone, or baseless objection.
- " 38, line 12, "*artificial*" = skilled.
- " 44, line 2, "*counters*" = money or coin, in contempt.
- " 51, line 27, "*his coming from hell*" = unseen world. To all desirous to master the literature of the question involved, may be recommended Huidekoper's "Belief of the First Three Centuries concerning Christ's Mission to the Underworld." N. York.
- " 53, line 32, "*carnally*" = bodily, actually, as distinguished from prior expectation.
- " 56, line 20, "*insult*" = triumph, boast. So page 237, line 8; page 299, line 13; page 316, line 3 from bottom.
- " 70, line 28, "*entity*" = being, existence.
- " 72, line 9, "*strappado*" and relative note. Rather = whip or lash, as in Braithwaite's Strappado for the Devil. See context, "*whirleth* it on high, and then lets it fall," etc.
- " 75, line 7, "*abject*" = despicable thing.
- " 78, line 10, "*wounds of Abel fall a-bleeding afresh*"—hence the old terrible ordeal of touch, wherein the supposed murderer was brought into the presence of the corpse of the slain and compelled to "touch." If guilty, the wound was supposed to "bleed afresh."
- " 80, line 9, "*ront*," = gay mixed ball-like "assembly."
- " 84, line 18, "*score*" = debt-book, or markings.
- " 100, line 3, "*roundly*" = *ore rotundo*, or with full mark.
- " 102, line 20, "*softly*" = soft—common, contemporaneously.
- " 103, line 6, "*comfortable*," and related note. Rather = consolatory.
- " 127, line 1, "*cried*" = proclaimed.
- " 154, line 21, "*chine*" = back, i.e. over-burdened, "heavy-laden."
- " 155, line 25, "*long*," line 26, "*long*" = became.
- " 162, line 9, "*censure*" = judge. So page 260, line 4 from bottom; and page 274, line 26.
- " 187, line 6 from bottom, "*husbands*" = husbandmen.
- " 190, line 4 from bottom, "*scammony*" = strong purgative herb.
- " 237, line 9, "*apology*" = defence, vindication.
- " 260, line 16, the "not" filled in is not required—a common contemporary construction.
- " 265, line 6, "*intensive*" = eager, stretching out. So page 273, line 10; page 334, line 1; page 348, line 18.
- " 277, last line, "*clawing*" = flattery. See Nares's Glossary, s.v., for a full note.
- " 283, line 8, "*misling*" = our drizzling.
- " 288, line 29, "*affected*" = affectioned. So page 290, lines 3, 11.
- " 307, line 6, "*handsomely*" = good favour, or look good.
- " 328, line 10, "*tincture*," and related note. Rather an alchemical term = touch.
- " 343, line 14, "*prevented*" = anticipated. So page 346, line 24.
- " 350, line 8, "*insolent*." Cf. note on p. 56, line 20, etc.
- " 355, line 26, "*kindly*," and related note. Rather = congruous or of kin. So page 404, line 1. Cf. Shakespeare, "more than kin and less than kind" (Hamlet 1. ii.)
- " 396, line 12, "*retaliation*" = return or recompense.
- † Page 17, line 3 from bottom, read "nut" for "nut": page 19, line 18, delete "us": page 30, line 27, read "and by which we shall be judged": page 37, line

ness ! May the memory of good Sir Richard Baker abide green ! The facsimile portrait of him showing prison-wornness, from the 1653 "Chronicle," is certainly truthful. ANTHONY-A-WOOD gives this summary description of him : "*He was a person tall and comely, of a good disposition and admirable discourse, religious and well read in various faculties, especially in divinity and history.*"

ALEXANDER B. GROSART.

ST. GEORGE'S VESTRY, BLACKBURN,
30th September, 1881.

APPENDIX.

SEEING that certain genealogical-biographical data on the Bakers, direct and collateral, have been put at my disposal by Mr. Tarbutt (as before), and somewhat added to by my own researches, I shall preserve them here by way of appendix to this Memorial-Introduction.

The reader will join on the following to the biographical details given in the outset. Sir Richard Baker, second son of Sir John Baker, died 27th May, 1594. He married (1) Catharine, daughter and heiress of John Tyrell, of Heron, co. Essex, son of Sir Thomas Tyrell, and by her mother heiress of the Marquis of Exeter ; (2) Mary, daughter of John Gifford (or Gyeforde, or Giffard), of Tiehall, co. Hants. This second wife on his death married (1) Richard Fletcher, Bp. of London, father of Dr. Giles Fletcher, and grandfather of Giles and Phineas Fletcher, the Poets ; (2) Sir Stephen Thorne (or Thornie), according to Harleian MS. 840, f. 42 b. Sir Richard left issue—a son John is mentioned in the will of his grandfather 1558, buried at Cranbrook, 1574 ; Thomas, second son, knighted at the Charterhouse 1603 : married in 1592 to Constantia, daughter

19, the f in "of" has got turned : page 61, line 17, "is" is misprinted "it" : page 146, line 25, read "heart," not "hear" : page 163, foot-note line 3, read "nurse" for "uurse" : page 214, line 3, read "may be said to be" : page 221, line 26, spell "sacrifices" : page 335, line 21, read "If thou . . ." page 338, line 19, spell "fainted" : page 340, line 5 from bottom "B" in "But" dropped out : page 355, line 6 from bottom, read "look" for "took" : page 432, line 1, the "h" of "then" dropped out.

of Sir William Kingsmill, of Lemm, near Ipswich, and had issue four sons and two daughters. By his second wife, he had two daughters, (1) Cresagon, married to Sir Henry Lennard (or Leonard), afterwards Lord Dacre; (2) —, married to Richard Blount, son and heir of Sir Thomas Blount.

JOHN, eldest son and heir of Sir Richard Baker (*ut supra*), married Mary, daughter of Sir Thomas Guildfoul, of Hempsted Bondenden, and had issue, two sons and two daughters, viz., Henry, Edward, Joessa (or Jocosa), and Catharine. Edward—of whom nothing more is known—was born in 1597; Joessa (or Jocosa) was married to Sir John Jewill, and Catharine to Edward Yates.

HENRY, eldest son of John Baker, Esq., was knighted before the year 1609; created a baronet in 1611; was next heir to Lord Mountjoy; died in Lime Street, London, and was buried at Cranbrook 1623. He had married Catharine, eldest daughter of Sir John Smith, of Belshanger, and had issue three sons and one daughter, viz., John, Thomas, Henry, and Elizabeth. Henry was posthumous; Thomas died in 1619, aged three years; Elizabeth—unknown.

Sir John Baker—eldest son of Sir Henry, 2nd baronet—to whose Lady our Worthy dedicated his “*Motives for Prayer*,” died in 1653, aged 45; buried at Cranbrook. He married Mary, daughter of a “knight,” gratefully recalled by Sir Richard in the epistle-dedicatory of his “*Meditations and Motives*.” She was buried at Cranbrook in 1669. Their issue was two sons and four daughters, viz., John, Robert, Sarah, Catharine, Mary, and Elizabeth;—nearly all died young.

Sir John Baker—eldest son of Sir John, 3rd baronet—was buried at Cranbrook in 1661; had married an Elizabeth (unknown), and left issue four daughters, viz., Sarah, Ann, Mary, and Elizabeth. Sarah died young in 1669; Ann married Edward Beagham, Esq., and died in 1685; Mary married John Dowell, Esq., of Over, in Gloucestershire; Elizabeth married Mr. Robert Spencer. These last three heiresses sold each their share in the Sissinghurst estates to Sir Horace Mann, of Linton, in the co. of Kent; and so ended the direct line.

Returning now to James Baker, brother of *the* historical

Sir John Baker, Chancellor of the Exchequer, etc., etc., these authentic details bring the descent down to our own day, and to—among others—SIR SAMUEL WHITE BAKER, the distinguished Traveller and Author.

1. JAMES BAKER, mentioned in the will of his grandfather, 1493, and of his father in 1504; to whom married not stated; had issue one son, named Walter.
2. WALTER BAKER, of Sherborne, in Dorset, gentleman: his will is dated 19th of April, the 26th year of Queen Elizabeth; proved 28th of May, 1854; married Catherine —, widow; she was left executrix to her husband's will, and had issue one son.
3. WALTER BAKER, married at Poole, co. Dorset, 22nd January, 1592, to Rebecca, daughter of John Andrew; baptized at Poole 15th July, 1573; had issue eight sons and two daughters. The date of baptism, with their names, as follows: William, 1593; Walter, 1595; John, 1598; Robert, 1601; Andrew, 1604; James, 1605; Nicholas, 1607; Joseph, 1610; Judith, 1596; and Rebecca, 1612. William, the eldest, married Elizabeth Gosselin, of Poole, 1619. No record that any other son or daughter was married except Andrew, the fifth son, and he inherited his father's estate.
4. ANDREW BAKER died at Poole 1662; married Sussanah —; she died 1665: had issue two sons and two daughters. Of the two daughters, no record beyond name and when baptized, viz., Joane, 1627, and Sussanah, 1630; and the only record of one son, viz., John: his baptism in 1631, and his marriage to Catharine — in 1660.
5. WALTER BAKER, the other son, inherited his father Andrew's estate: was born 1638; married Magdaline, daughter of Francis Wild. She was baptized at Poole, 1638; had issue three sons and six daughters. The only record in the pedigree of these nine children is as follows: Andrew, baptized at Poole 1660; Joane, bap. at Poole 1663; married in 1698 to James Seager; Elizabeth, bap. at Poole 1665, died 1668; Sussanah, bap. at Poole 1668; married, 1698, to Samuel Russell; John, bap. at Poole 1674; Elizabeth, bap. at Poole 1671; married, 1705, to John Thomson; Magdaline, bap. at Poole 1677; Sarah, bap. at Poole 1680, died 1684; and Joseph, bap. at Poole 1679.
6. JOSEPH BAKER, the youngest son, inherited his father's estate; born in 1679; married 21st of January, 1705; buried 30th of January, 1722. His will is dated 1718: proved at Standford that his children were all under age in 1722: married Mary, daughter of Francis Wild. She was bap. at Poole 1684, and though left executrix to her husband's will, she died the same year, and so did not prove his will. She left issue one son and two daughters, viz., Sussanah, bap. at Poole 1706, mentioned in her father's will 1718; Mary married Capt. Francis Wallis, R.N.; John succeeded to his father's estate.

7. JOHN BAKER, born 1712, mentioned in his father's will 1718; married at Poole, 29th of January, 1732; an officer in the R.N., commanded the letter of marque, *Blood Joke*, 10 guns, afterwards Harbour-master of Bristol; died 1781; married Rhoda Valentine Nicholson, of Poole; born 1709; died in 1800, aged 91 years. [Her father married, in 1699, Dorothy Carter]; she had issue five sons and four daughters, as follows: Mary, born 1733; Joseph, 1735; Valentine, 1737; John, 1739; Francis, 1742; Joseph, 1743; Ruth, —; Sarah, 1748; Elizabeth, —. Mary married Capt. Moore, and died 1776; Joseph died young; Valentine succeeded to the estate, and died in 1790; John married Ann —, Master of his Majesty's ship *Deal Castle*; died without issue; his will proved in 1782; Francis Wallis married a daughter of — Martin, Esq., an officer in the R.N. [He had a son, a commander of an East Indiaman, and died without issue.] Joseph died without issue. Ruth married John Bernard, Esq., of Cork; Sarah —; Elizabeth married George Oakeley.
8. VALENTINE BAKER, born 1737, Commander letter of marque *Carsar*, 18 guns; married Eleanor, daughter of Samuel Mattick, and had issue seven sons and four daughters, viz., Eleanor Ruth, born 1776, died same year; James Lockyer, born 1779; Sarah Ellen, married Wildman Goodwin, Esq., Judge of India Civil Service; Eleanor, born 1781, married twice, and died in 1868; Sophia, married John Bernard, Esq., of Cork; George Oakely, born 1782, died 1796; Valentine, born 1784, died 1790; John Samuel, Commander of an East Indiaman, died without issue; William Mattick, born 1791, died 1805; Samuel, who succeeded to the family estate, born 1793, died 1862; Francis, born 1795, died 1832.
9. SAMUEL BAKER, Esq., Lypiat Park, co. Gloucester, and of Thorngrove, Worcester, married Mary Ann, daughter of Thomas Dodson, Esq., as his first wife, and Eliza Maria, relict of Shelton, as second wife, and had issue, five sons and three daughters, viz.,
 1. THOMAS, died young.
 2. Sir SAMUEL WHITE, born 1821, the African traveller. Sir Samuel has been twice married, and has four daughters by his first wife.
 3. JOHN GARLAND, born 1822, married 1863; has issue two sons and two daughters.
 4. ELLEN, married Rev. F. Hopkinson, D.D.
 5. VALENTINE, born 1827, Col. of the 10th Hussars; married twice, and has issue two daughters. "Silence is golden."
 6. JAMES BAKER, born 1830, of the 8th Royal Hussars, Lt.-Col. of the Cambridge University Volunteers; married Sarah Louisa, daughter of Capt. White, and has three sons and one daughter.
 7. MARY ANN, married, 1868, Henry Causton.
 8. ANN ELIZA, married Capt. Robt. Bourne.

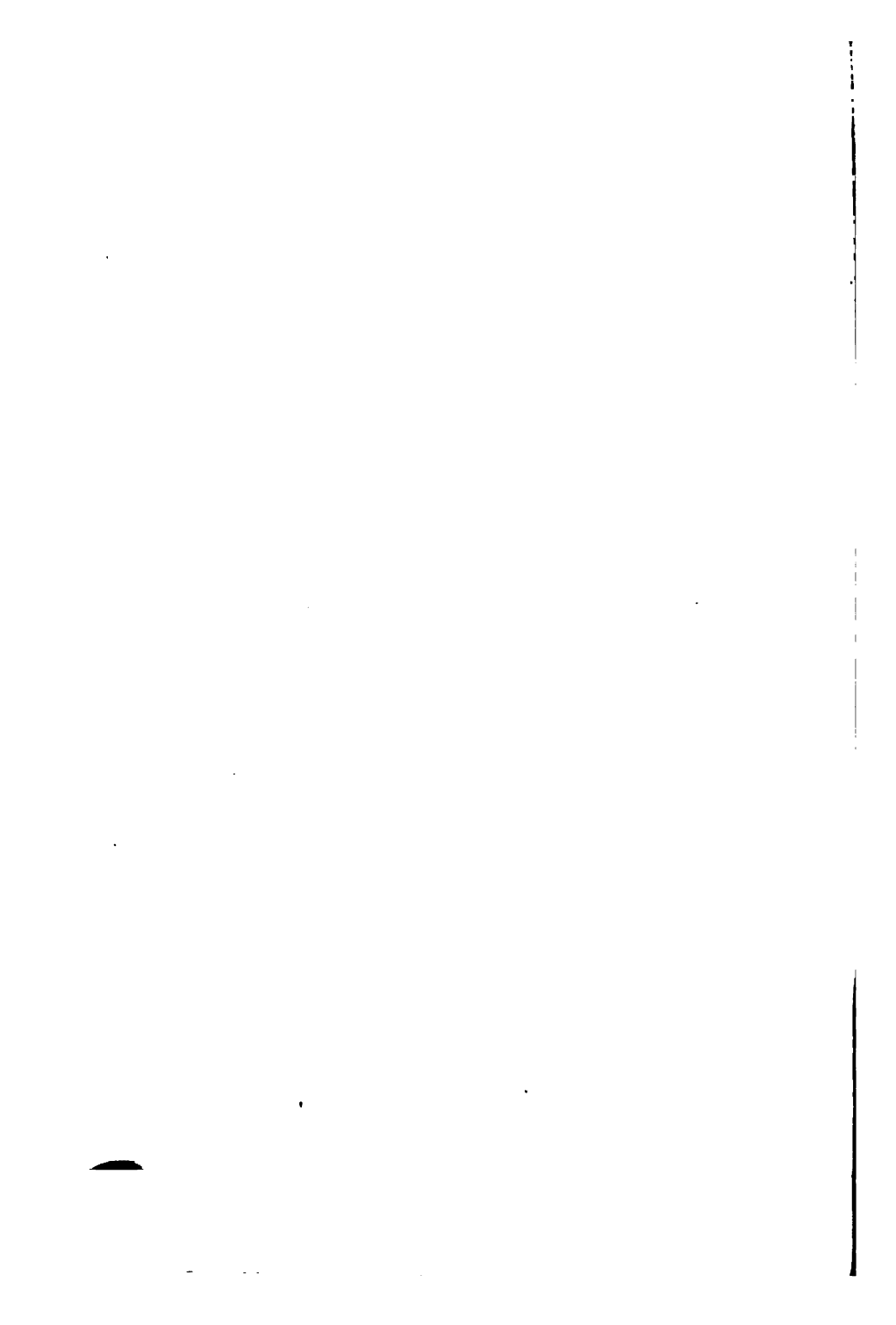
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To the
RIGHT HONOURABLE
THOMAS, LORD COVENTRY,*

BARON OF AYLESBOROUGH, AND LORD KEEPER OF THE GREAT
SEAL OF ENGLAND.

MY HONOURED LORD,—He may truly be said [to be] a happy man, *Cui omnes bene volunt* [to whom all wish well]: but more truly he, *Cui omnes bene velle debent* [to whom all should wish well]: and in both these rights I may justly pronounce your Lordship happy: yet there is a better title for asserting happiness to you than both these; that your delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law [you] will exercise yourself both day and night;¹ for now it is not the world, it is not I, it is David himself, that pronounceth you happy; and give me leave, my Lord, to show you the picture of a happy man, drawn here by David; and let all the world judge if it resemble not you, and that so near, that not any in our age, and I may say nor yet in many ages, hath been more like it. And having showed you this, my part remains only to pray that you may long enjoy this happiness as a fruit of your virtue here, and come at last to be like the tree² itself; which will yield you a fruit of happiness that shall never fade, nor so much as the leaves of it ever wither; for how should they wither, when *In memoria aeterna erit justus*³ [the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance]? Thus he prayeth that is

Your Lordship's humble and devoted servant,

RICHARD BAKER.

[* Son of Thomas Coventry, one of the Justices of Common Pleas; was born 1578, at Croomé d'Abitot, Worcestershire. He became Recorder of the City of London in 1616, then successively Solicitor and Attorney-General, and, under Charles I., Lord Keeper of the Great Seal. He was made a baron of the realm in 1628, under the title of Lord Aylesborough, in Worcestershire. Lord Clarendon says of him, "Though in his own nature he had not only a firm gravity, but a severity, and even some moroseness; yet it was so happily tempered, and his courtesy and affability towards all men so transcendent, and so without affectation, that it marvellously recommended him to men of all degrees; and he was looked upon as an excellent courtier, without receding from the natural simplicity of his own manners."—Cf. Lord Campbell's "Lord Chancellors," and all the biographical dictionaries, *sub nomine*.

¹ Ps. i. 2.

² Ps. i. 3.

³ Ps. cxii. 6.]

[Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2. But his delight *is* in the law of the Lord ; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season ; his leaf also shall not wither ; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4. The ungodly *are* not so : but *are* like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous : but the way of the ungodly shall perish.—PSALM i.]

MEDITATIONS AND DISQUISITIONS

UPON THE

FIRST PSALM OF DAVID.

IT may be thought but an idle speculation to observe that the first word of this Psalm, in the Hebrew, begins with *Aleph*, the first letter of the alphabet; and the last word of it begins with *Tau*, the last letter of the alphabet, as though this Psalm should contain whatsoever may be expressed by all the letters of the alphabet. And it may be little better to observe that this first Psalm hath a kind of correspondence to our first parents: for the first word of it is *blessed*, and the last word is *perishing*; and such was their condition; they began in blessedness, but they ended in perishing: they began in blessedness, being placed in Paradise, where they had the Tree of Life; but they ended in perishing, being cast out of Paradise, where they died the death. But although the Prophet perhaps had none of these conceits, yet he had great reason for so placing his words; for *blessedness* is the mark we all aim at; if that be once named, there needs no other rhetoric to make us attentive; most properly therefore it is placed the first word, seeing the first words are the proper place to persuade attention. And as fitly is *perishing* placed the last word; that if the hope of blessedness cannot allure us to godliness, yet the fear of perishing may keep us from wickedness; seeing nothing so much deters from evil doing as the fear of evil suffering; and the word is justly placed the last, that it may

last the longer in our memories, seeing the last words ever are best remembered.

But to leave these general aims, and to come to particulars and certainties, we may perceive that this whole Psalm offers itself to be drawn into these two opposite propositions: a godly man is blessed, a wicked man is miserable; which seem to stand as two challenges made by the Prophet: one, that he will maintain a godly man, against all comers, to be the only Jason,¹ for winning the golden fleece of blessedness; the other, that he will make it good upon the heads of all the wicked; that howsoever they make a show in the world of being happy, yet they of all men are most miserable. But lest there should grow litigiousness about the words, he will have it agreed upon—first, what a godly man is; and what it is must qualify this happy Jason. It seems the Prophet had heard of an old description of a godly man: *Declina a malo et fac bonum*—Eschew evil, and do good;² but finding this too general, and too much folded up, he thinks it necessary to open the first part of it into two or three negative marks,³ and the last part of it into two affirmatives. But are not these strange marks to begin withal? as though he could know a godly man by negatives, or that godliness consisted in negation?—as if virtue were only *vitium fugere* [the avoiding vice]? Indeed, the first godliness that ever was—that is, the first commandment of God—was delivered to our first parents in a negative: “Of the tree of good and evil, ye shall not eat;”⁴ and if they had well observed this negative, they should never have sinned in any affirmative. As long as it could be said of Adam, “There goes a man that never eat of the forbidden tree,” so long it might as well be said of him, “There goes a perfect, righteous man.” And even the first written Law of Commandments was delivered likewise, in a manner, all in negatives: “Thou shalt not kill; Thou shalt not steal,” and the rest, in which so much godliness is contained as might have brought us all to heaven; as Christ

¹ Leader of the Argonauts in the Greek heroic age, type of spiritual heroism, and its quest of goodness. ² 1 Peter iii. 11. ³ Distinguishing qualities or attributes.

⁴ “Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, ye shall not eat of it.”—Gen. ii. 17.

told the young man, *Si vis ad vitam ingredi, serva mandata* ["If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments"].¹ Justly, therefore, the Prophet begins his godliness here with negatives, seeing negatives at first began all godliness.

But as the evil spirit in the Gospel answered the Jewish conjurers, who in their adjuration used the names of Jesus and Paul: "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?"² so here, perhaps, some curious spirits may object, and say, "The negative commandments of the first table I know; and the negatives of the second table I know; but what are these?" They are not, indeed, the very mark we aim at, but they are the means that guide us to the mark; and, if by observing those we arrive at the haven, by observing these we avoid the rocks that hinder us from the haven.

But why would the Prophet use any negatives at all, and not rather rely wholly upon affirmatives? as to say, "That hath walked in the counsel of the godly; that hath stood in the way of the righteous; that hath sat in the chair of the humble?" and thus he might have made his argument in Barbara;³ and never needed to have troubled negatives at all? But negatives in this case could not be denied; for if he had left out negatives, he had left out a great part of the worth and praise of godliness—for a godly man cannot always run in smooth ground—he shall sometimes meet with rubs; he cannot always breathe in sweet airs—he shall sometimes meet with ill savours; he cannot always sail in safe seas—he shall sometimes meet with rocks; and then it is his praise that he can pass over those rubs, can pass through those savours, can pass by those rocks, and yet keep himself upright and untainted, and untouched of them all. Besides, negative precepts are in some cases more absolute and peremptory than affirmatives: for to say, "That hath walked in the counsel of the godly," might not be sufficient; for he might walk in the counsel of the godly, and yet walk in the counsel of the ungodly too; not both

¹ Matt. xix. 17. ² Acts xix. 15. ³ A term of logic which signifies that *mood* or form of the syllogism in which from two universal affirmative premisses, a universal affirmative conclusion is reached.

indeed at once, but both at several times; where now this negative clears him at all times. And may it not also be a cause of using negatives, because it seems an easier way of showing what a thing is, by showing what it is not, than by using only affirmative marks; especially where a perfect induction¹ may be made; and herein David not unfitly may be thought to reflect upon himself, and the case [to be] not unlike to Samuel's seeking to find out a king amongst the sons of Jesse?² For when Eliab was brought forth, Samuel verily thought that he had been the man; and afterwards, Abinadab, that it had been he; and then that Shammai,³ without all doubt was he; for these were all goodly personages, likely men in show,⁴ to make kings of. But when God refused these, and all the rest, and that there was none left but only David, then was Samuel forced at last to fall upon him. So in our case here, the world is verily persuaded that the likeliest men to be blessed are those that walk in the counsel of the ungodly, or those that stand in the way of sinners, or such as sit in the chair of scorners; for these are all great gallants, and make a goodly show in the world; but when the Prophet hath rejected all these, and none is left but the godly man, then we are forced of necessity at last to fall upon him; and as David was the unlikelyest of all his brothers to be a king, yet he was the man, so a godly man seems the unlikelyest of all others to be blessed, yet he is the man. "In the world ye shall have trouble,"⁵ saith Christ; this makes him unlikely; but "be of good cheer, I have overcome the world;" this makes him the man. And thus, as God directed Samuel to elect by rejecting, so David directs us here to choose by refusing; and this is a cause, also, that makes negatives, in many cases, so much in request.

But though some negatives, in some cases, may be fitly used, yet it follows not that these in this; and therefore it will be fit to examine these negatives, and to see what they

¹ One "in which there is a complete enumeration of all the individuals, respecting which we assert collectively what we had before asserted separately."—*Whately*.
² 2 Sam. xvi. 6—13. ³ Shammai. ⁴ In appearance. ⁵ John xvi. 33: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

are: that "hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly; that hath not stood in the way of sinners; that hath not sat in the chair of scorners;"¹ and are not these, in this case, strange marks? As though we should know a godly man by the postures of his body; or as if a godly man should neither walk, nor stand, nor sit. And what remains, then, but that he should do nothing else but lie? and yet this he must not do neither; for lying is the posture of a wicked man, as it is said, He lieth in wait to do mischief.² Indeed, walking hath been often branded with notes of miscarrying: Dinah went a-walking in the flowery fields,³ and returned home deflowered; Cain went a-walking with Abel into the field a brother, and returned home a murderer;⁴ and it seems to have been an old exercise of the Devil himself, who answered God, that he came from "walking and compassing the earth;"⁵ and Christ warned his apostles not to walk into the way of the Gentiles,⁶ which seems not much different from this caveat [warning]⁷ here.

But though walking may be a hindrance to godliness, yet standing, perhaps, may be a furtherance; for Christ saith, "when ye stand praying,"⁸ and so it is the posture of piety; and it is said of Moses that he stood in the gap,⁹ and so it was the posture of charity; and the angels are said to stand before God,¹⁰ and so it is the posture of reverence; and yet, for all this, if standing be not joined with understanding, as if we stand where we should kneel, as when David saith, Let us fall down and kneel before the Lord our Maker;¹¹ or if we stand in places where we should not, as is the way of sinners; or if we stand amongst persons that we ought not, as in sinners' way;—in all such cases standing may be as great a hindrance to godliness as ever walking was.

Yet, surely, sitting is an innocent posture: sitting never

¹ Ps. i. 1: "That walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." ² Ps. x. 9: "He lieth in wait to catch the poor." ³ Gen. xxxiv. 1, 2. ⁴ Gen. iv. 8. ⁵ Job i. 7: "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." ⁶ Matt. x. 5: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles." ⁷ Warning. ⁸ Mark xi. 25. ⁹ Num. xvi. 48: "He stood between the dead and the living." Compare Ezek. xxii. 30: "I sought for a man that should . . . stand in the gap." ¹⁰ 1 Kings xxii. 19: "I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him," etc. ¹¹ Ps. xcv. 6: "Let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD our Maker."

committed adultery, never stole, never did any murder; and not only an innocent, but a reverent posture: it is the posture of a judge, as it is said, Ye shall sit and judge the twelve tribes of Israel;¹ it is the posture of a king, as it is said, To the king that sitteth upon his throne;² it is the posture of angels, as of the four-and-twenty elders in the Revelation;³ and yet, as innocent and reverent as it is, it may be abused, for if we sit in the way of lasciviousness, as Thamar did;⁴ or if we sit in the chair of injustice, as Pilate did;⁵ or if we sit in the seat of pestilence, as it is said here, sitting may prove as great a bane to godliness as either standing or walking was.

But they are not the postures that are here blamed, but the impostures; that we be not drawn abroad a-walking, as to take the fresh air, and then be poisoned with infectious savours; that we be not kept standing in a pleasant way, and then the enemy who lieth in wait continually come suddenly and surprise us; that we sit not idly and take our ease, and in the meantime the bridegroom pass by, and we be shut out of doors. For if there be nothing else in it but walking, a godly man may walk as much as he will, seeing there is not only a godly walking as it is said of Noah, that he "walked with God,"⁶ which was a walking in godliness; but there is a blessed walking, as it is said of Enoch, that he "walked with God,"⁷ that is, God took him from walking in this vale of misery, to walk with him eternally in Paradise.

The mark therefore to know a godly man consists not in the not walking; but we must walk further to find it; and the next word we come to is *counsel*, and the negative cannot consist in this word neither, for counsel is one of the most excellent gifts that is given to man;—that it is even one of the names of God himself to be called Counsellor,⁸ the negative therefore not found here neither. We must yet go further, and the next word we come to is ungodly, and now certainly we shall have a full negative, for ungodliness is the

¹ Matt. xix. 28: "Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." ² Prov. xx. 8: "A king that sitteth in the throne." ³ Rev. iv. 4. ⁴ Gen. xxxviii. 14. ⁵ Matt. xxvii. 19. ⁶ Gen. vi. 9. ⁷ Gen. v. 24. ⁸ Is. ix. 6.

herb that marreth all the *broth*,¹ it poisons all the company that it comes in,—not only walking, a thing in itself indifferent, but even counsel, a thing in its own nature most sovereign: they are both marred by this one ingredient of ungodliness. The like may be said of the other two that follow, for neither standing, nor standing in the way, doth any hurt till we come at sinners; neither sitting, nor sitting in a chair, does any hurt till we come at scorners; all the hurt, like the sting in the tail of a serpent,² comes in the last. Walking in counsel had been a safe proceeding, if the ungodly had not given it; standing in the way had been a lawful calling, if sinners had not made it; sitting in a chair had been an easy posture, if scorners had not framed it; but if the ungodly, or sinners, or scorners have any hand at all in our actions, have anything to do in our doings, both safety, and lawfulness, and ease, and all are utterly overthrown.

Or, may we not take a way which crosseth the great highway of the world, and conceive it thus: to walk in the counsel of the ungodly is a pleasant walk, and if pleasure would make us blessed, were likely to do it; to stand in the way of sinners is a profitable way, and if profit will make us blessed, were the way to do it; to sit in the chair of scorners is an honourable seat, and if honour would make us blessed, would serve to do it; but all these courses the Prophet rejecteth: they are so far from making us blessed, that he gives us warning of them as the only impediments that hinder us from blessedness. And, therefore, the voluptuous man is deceived in placing blessedness in pleasures, for howsoever he fare deliciously every day in this life, yet he may hear of a terrible after-reckoning brought in by St. John, How much thou receivest in pleasures here, so much shall be added to thy torments hereafter.³ The covetous man is deceived in placing blessedness in riches, for howsoever they make him welcome in all companies where he comes in this world, yet he may hear of a grievous repulse to be given him by Abraham: Son, thou hast received thy

¹ Cf. 2 Kings iv. 39, 40. ² Rev. x. 9: "They had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails." ³ Luke xvi. 19: The man "fared sumptuously every day." Cf. Rev. xviii. 7. "How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her."

portion in this life, and therefore hast no right of ever coming into my bosom.¹ The ambitious man is deceived in placing blessedness in honour, for howsoever he sit aloft in his chair, and play *rex* [the king] here, yet he may hear of a cruel downfall foretold him by Isaiah, Thou hast said in thy heart, I will climb up above the clouds, and will be equal to the Highest; but thou shalt be cast down to the pit of hell, and to the nethermost lake.²

But have then ungodly men counsel? One would think it were want of counsel that makes them ungodly, for who would be ungodly if he had counsel to direct him? Certainly, counsel they have, and wise counsel too; that is, wise in the eye of the world, and wise for the works of the world; but wise in the sight of God, and wise for the works of godliness, they have not; and in that kind of wisdom ungodly men are your greatest counsellors—greatest in the ability of counsel, and greatest in the busying themselves with counselling. For their wisdom in counsel we have a precedent in Achitophel, who was in his time a most wicked man, and yet for counsel was the oracle³ of his time. And, for their forwardness in counselling, it is a quality they have, as it were *ex traduce* [by ingrafting], from their father the devil, who, no sooner creatures were made that were capable of counsel, but he fell a-counselling; and such, indeed, are all the ungodly, as it is in the Psalm,⁴ The poison of asps is under their lips. It serves not their turn to do wickedly in their own persons, but they must be drawing others into wickedness by poisoning and infecting them with wicked counsel. So, then, the not walking in the counsel of the ungodly, is not to hearken to the hissing of the serpent, nor to make wicked men our counsellors, nor in the course and actions of our life to be directed by them.

But, if this be all, what great matter is it? or what needed

¹ Luke xvi. 25: "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." ² Isa. xiv. 13—15: "Thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." ³ 2 Sam. xvi. 23. ⁴ Rom. iii. 13. Cf. Ps. cxl. 3: "Adders' poison is under their lips."

so great a caveat to be given of it? Certainly both the danger and the difficulty deserve a principal¹ caveat; and in the caveat itself we may see them both; for there are but three words in it, and every word is as a cord to draw us into sin. If pleasure will entice us, here is walking to do it; if reasons will persuade us, here is counsel to do it; if number will overrule us, here is the plural against the singular to do it: that the air is not more pestilent to be taken in than hard to be kept out; the rock is not more dangerous to be run upon than difficult to be avoided.

We would now proceed to the second mark, but that we know not how to set our feet; for we begin to see, or seem to see, a gradation before us, and, as I may say, a pair of stairs; but whether we go up or down the stairs in this gradation is made a question. But is it not strange [that] we should not know the ground we go upon—whether it rise or fall, whether it be ascending or descending? Yet such is the Prophet's contrivance here, that doctors doubt it, and are divided. Many grave authors there are on both sides, many great reasons on both sides, to maintain their opinions. They which think it an ascent, conceive it thus, that he which walketh in the counsel of the ungodly is yet but wavering, as misled by opinion, and makes but an error; he that stands in the way of sinners, stands out with obstinacy, and makes a heresy; but he that sits in the chair of scorn, is at defiance with God, and makes an apostacy. They who think it a descent, do thus conceive it: he which walks in the counsel of the ungodly, delights and takes a pleasure in his sin; he which stands in the way of sinners, stands in doubt, and is unresolved in his sin; but he who sits in the seat of the scornful, sits down and sins but for his ease, as being unable to suffer persecution. They who think it an ascent, conceive that the ungodly are but beginners in ill; that sinners are proficient in ill; but the scornful are graduates and doctors of the chair² in ill. They who think it a descent, conceive that the ungodly are opposite to the godly, and offend generally; that sinners offend, though actually, yet but in particulars; that scornful

¹ Emphatic.² College Professors.

might be found at heart, if they did not set themselves to sale, and sin for promotion. The ascent may be briefly thus: that walking expresseth less resolution than standing, and standing than sitting; but in sin, the more resolute, the more dissolute: therefore sitting is the worst. The descent thus: that walking expresseth more strength than standing, and standing than sitting; for a child can sit when he cannot stand, and stand when he cannot walk; but the stronger in sin, the worse; therefore walking is the worst. Many such ways there are of conceiving diversity, either in ascending or descending; but it needs be no question which is the worse, because, without question, they are all stark nought: they are three rocks, whereof the least is enough to make a shipwreck; they are three pestilential airs, whereof the best is enough to poison the heart. This only may be observed, that howsoever the case alter with walkers and sitters, yet standers in the way of sinners keep their standing still; and whichsoever is first or last, yet they are sure to be the second.

But is it not that we mistake the Prophet, and make his words a gradation, when, perhaps, he meant them for level ground? And for such, indeed, we may take them, and do as well, and then there will not be either ascent or descent in the sins themselves, but only a diversity in their causes; as that the first is a sin caused by ill counsel; the second, a sin caused by ill example; the third, a sin caused by the innate corruption of our own hearts. And so we shall have the three principal heads or springs from which all sins do flow, and may probably be exemplified by the three first persons that were in the world: the first, committed by Eve, in following the counsel of that ungodly one, the serpent; the second, committed by Adam, in following the example of the sinful Eve; the third, committed by Cain, who sinned not either by any ill counsel or by any ill example, but only by the inbred corruption of his own heart. And in this we may observe the wonderful proneness of our nature to sin, seeing the three first persons in the world had every one of them a several spring-head of sin of their own opening; as if they thought there were no honour but in being

the first founder of sin. And if there had been in nature a fourth spring-head of sin to be found, the fourth man, most likely, would have found it out; but these it seems were all. And so the fourth man, Abel, in his turn, found out a spring-head of another making—the true fountain of life; but the other spring-heads have ever since been so frequented, that Abel's fountain hath been wholly almost neglected, that the Prophet had great reason to give us caveats for drinking at those poisoned springs, and to have recourse to the true fountain of life, which is the law of God.

Or is it that the Prophet alludes here to the three principal ages of our life, which have every one of them their proper vices, as it were, retainers to them?—and therefore the vices of youth, which is the vigour of life, and delights most in motion and society, he expresseth by walking in the counsel of the ungodly; the vices of the middle age, which is *stata ætas* [the steadfast age], he expresseth by standing in the way of sinners; the vices of old age, which, being weak and feeble, is scarce able to go, he expresseth by sitting in the chair of scorners, and it is as if he had said, “Blessed is the man that hath passed through all the ages of his life, and hath kept himself untainted of the vices that are incident unto them; that hath passed the days of his youth as it were the morning of his life, and is not tainted with the stirring vices of voluptuousness and prodigality; that hath passed his middle age as it were the noon of his life, and is not tainted with the more elevated vices of ambition and vain-glory; that hath passed his old age as it were the evening of his life, and is not tainted with the sluggish vices of covetousness and avarice.”

Or is it, there being five degrees of sin—concupiscence, consent, act, custom, and pride in sinning; the two first, as incident oftentimes to the godliest men, he forbears to speak of, and intimates only the three last; for to walk in the counsel of the ungodly, what is it but the act of sin? and to stand in the way of sinners, what is it but the custom of sin? and to sit in the chair of scorners, what is it but to take a pride in sin?

Or is it, finally, that by this distinction of postures the Prophet intends an absolute restraint from all manner of conversation with the wicked ; so absolute that it may be said, in a proverbial manner, we neither walk, nor stand, nor sit amongst them ; for if but the least liberty be taken in conversing with them, it may well be said, the passing of a camel through a needle's eye ;¹ exceeding hard, if not altogether impossible, to escape untainted.

We may now consider the second mark, as it is in itself, without gradation ; and is not this also a strange mark of a godly man, that he should not dare to stand in the way of sinners ? For what hurt can he take by standing in their way ? Is it not a broad and a large way,² that sinners may go by, and no hurt to him at all ? But a godly man is wiser than so ; though he know that the way is large and broad, yet he knows also that the press is great ;³ a man cannot stand here, but he shall be shouldered and thrust forward in spite of his teeth. It is not here as in the way of the righteous, where a man may stand long enough before he shall meet with company to thrust him forward ; but here is crowding and thronging, that we can neither go here, nor do here, as we would, but must of necessity go as the crowd drives us, must perforce do as the company will have us ; that he may justly be counted a happy man that can avoid this rock, which hath been the cause of more shipwrecks than either Scylla or Charybdis.

If the way of sinners were a blind, obscure way, or a man were blind and could not see his way, there might be ways of excuse for standing in it ; but seeing all men's eyes are open to this way, and this way lies open to all men's eyes, to stand in it now, is not to stand in the way of sinners, but to sin in the way of understanding ; and such sin shall be punished with many stripes.⁴

A man may be in the way of sinners, and be excused ; but to stand in the way is unexcusable ; for his being there may be by accident, but his standing there must needs be volun-

¹ Matt. xix. 24. ² Matt. vii. 13 : "Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." ³ *Ibid.* ⁴ Luke xii. 47 : "That servant, which knew his lord's will . . . shall be beaten with many stripes."

tary; and seeing nearness to a place, and continuance in a place, are great engrossers of the qualities of a place, how fully must he needs engross the way of sinners to himself that stands in it, which contains them both? For whilst nearness works by addition, and continuance by multiplication, the standing in the way of sinners, as gathering heat by both, must needs break forth at last into violent flames of sinning.

It is, therefore, no doubt, a good mark of a godly man that he will not stand in the way of sinners; but why should he not sit in the chair of scornors? for he may sit there and take his ease, and neither do hurt to others nor take hurt himself. He will do both; he will take hurt by brazening his own face, and he will do hurt by poisoning others' hearts. For when a man comes once to sit in the chair of scornors, it hardens him in his sin, it makes him to make a profession of it; he grows to take it in scorn that any man should be wickedder than himself; he sits, as it were, a-brooding of sin; what at first he was ashamed of, that now he glories in; and what before he was glad to do standing, he is confident now to do sitting in his chair. And as he takes this hurt himself, so doth he yet more hurt to others. For when a man in authority gives ill examples, it spreads far and prevails much; it is a pestilent thing to be wicked, *ex cathedra* [in the seat of power]: their chair stands high, and is seen and heard of many. One Pharisee may do more hurt than a hundred Sadducees; and where the poison of ungodly counsel, and the poison of sinful company, reacheth but to men near hand, the poison of this cathedral¹ wickedness reacheth far and near, that he may justly be accounted a happy man that can avoid this rock, which hath been the immediate ruin of many, and the cause of ruin to many more.

There are divers sorts of chairs, and all worth the sitting in, out only this of scornors. There is a chair of majesty; and this is made by God himself,² and makes them all as gods³ that sit in it; for to this chair there is a blessing

¹ Enthroned. ² Ps. lxxxix. 4: I will "build up thy throne to all generations."

³ Ps. lxxxii. 6: "I have said, Ye are gods."

annexed, which makes it sacred: "Touch not mine anointed."¹ There is a chair of doctrine, and this was first set up by Moses, and makes them all reverend that sit in it, for it hath a privilege belonging to it: "Do my prophets no harm."¹ Only this chair of scorners hath none that will avow the making it; it seems to have been broken with the fall of Lucifer,² and ever since hath been dangerous to sit in; yet it stands in opposition with both the others, for it scorns to obey the chair of majesty, and makes a mock of hearkening to the chair of doctrine; and therefore this chair is so far from having any blessing belonging to it, that all the curses of Mount Ebal³ are too little for it.

And as there are divers sorts of chairs, so there are divers of scorners: some scorn their inferiors, and forget that in scorning them they reproach their Maker; some scorn their betters, and seem scholars of the Pharisee, to think none so good as themselves, though none so bad; some scorn to be reproved, as being wise in their own conceit, of whom saith Solomon, "There is less hope than of a fool."⁴ Some scorn to hear it said the world shall ever have end; and are herein themselves a sign that it is drawing to an end, seeing such mockers (saith St. Peter) "shall come in the last days."⁵ Some scorn the ministers of God's word; and if at any time they hear them, it is but as the Athenians would hear Paul, to hear what this babbler would say.⁶ Some scorn God himself, and are ready to answer as Pharaoh answered Moses, "What is God?" and "Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice?"⁷ Yet all these scorners have their chair to sit in, set indeed on high, but set in slippery places, and giving them falls as certain as dangerous, or rather most certain, and yet more dangerous, [so] that he may justly be counted a happy man that can avoid this chair, which gives a worse fall than Eli's chair did, in which he fell down backward and brake his neck.⁸

But why should the Prophet speak so scornfully of scorners,

¹ Ps. cv. 15. ² Isa. xiv. 12. ³ Deut. xl. 29. ⁴ Prov. xxvi. 12: "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him."
⁵ 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4: "There shall come in the last days scoffers . . . saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" ⁶ Acts xvii. 18: "Some said, What will this babbler say?" ⁷ Ex. v. 2. ⁸ 1 Sam. iv. 18.

and give them so base a place amongst sinners, seeing not only godly men, but (if with reverence we may say it) even God himself seems to stand in the number of being scorner? For was not Mordecai, the good Jew, a scorner? ¹ who scorned so much as to make a leg, ² or so much as to put off his hat to Haman,—himself a poor snake ³ Jew, to Haman, a prince, and prime favourite of great King Ahasuerus? May not God himself be said a scorner, of whom it is said that he laughs the wicked to scorn, and hath them in derision? ⁴ And how, then, can scorning be so great a sin, being found in him in whom is nothing but transcendent goodness? Or how, at least, may we distinguish the vicious scorning from that which is the virtue? Is it not that we may distinguish them by their chair? For wicked scorner are set aloft in their chair; they think they cannot be noble unless they be proud; but the good scorner sit not in a chair when they scorn; they keep state indeed, but it is with humility. God may be said to scorn, as he is said to be angry; but as he bids us us to “be angry, and sin not,” ⁵ so he is angry, but sins not, because his anger is never but for sin; he scorner, but sins not, because he scorner none but sinners; and as such anger, so such scorn, may possibly be and is—is and lawfully may be—in godly men, and to speak *ἀνθρωποπαθῶς* [after the manner of men], in God himself.

But why would the Prophet say, “Blessed is the man,” as though blessedness were entailed to heirs male, or as though the law of God were like the law Salic of France, excluding women from the kingdom of heaven? for else he should rather have said, “Blessed is every man or woman,” and not say only, “Blessed is the man.” But is it not that David knew better the extent of his words than to be so superfluous; for ever since the time of which Moses saith, God made man; male and female created he them, ⁶ women have had as good right to the word as men, though it pass in their name; and if we say *more* right, we shall say perhaps but right; for how else could Christ be called the Son of man,

¹ Esther iii. 2. ² To bow, *flexere genua*, to bend the knees (Vulg.) ³ Contemptible.

⁴ Ps. ii. 4: “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.” ⁵ Eph. iv. 26. ⁶ Gen. i. 27: “So God created man in his *own* image; in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”

who we all know was the Son of but only woman? And if we look upon examples of blessedness, we shall find as well women as men recorded for blessed; and if any advantage be, it seems rather on the woman's side, seeing we find one woman to have attained a greater degree of blessedness than ever any man did, except only her only Son, "the man Christ Jesus."¹

If a man have not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, it may probably be thought he hath gone the fairer way; and then he hath a title to blessedness by this rule, "Blessed are they that walk" in the law of the Lord. If he have not stood in the way of sinners, it may charitably be thought he is sorry that ever he came there; and then he may lay claim to blessedness by this rule, "Blessed *are* they that mourn,"² and are penitent for their sins. And if he have not sat in the chair of scorers, it may with good reason be thought he hath done it in humility; and then he hath a right to blessedness by this rule, "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit,"³ for "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."⁴ But for all this, and nevertheless, it may be said that these are yet but negative marks, and can make at most but a godliness by negation, which can no more properly be said a godliness than *indolentia* [absence of pain] may be said to be *voluptas* [pleasure]. The true godliness is a positive thing, and cannot be affirmed out of negatives; it is a habit, and cannot be concluded from privations. The Prophet therefore stays not here, but proceeds, and hastens to the affirmative marks; for they, indeed, are the proper characters of a godly man; they are never found but in him, and in him they are ever found. And of these there is but a pair, as they came into Noah's ark, and yet enough to make a breed—enough to bring godliness to its full propagation. And he seems to frame his process in this manner: a man is known what he is by his delight; for such as a man's delight is, such a man himself is;⁵ and therefore a godly man delights not to walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor to stand in the way of sinners, nor to sit in the chair of

¹ 1 Tim. ii. 5. ² Matt. v. 4. ³ Matt. v. 3. ⁴ Jas. iv. 6. ⁵ Prov. xxiii. 7.

scorners, for these are all lawless delights—at least, delights of that law of which St. Paul saith, “I find another law in my members :”¹ they agree not with a godly man’s nature, and though a delight there must be, there is not living without it ; yet a godly man will rather want it, than take it up in such commodities. *But his delight is in the law of the Lord ;* [ver. 2] and now the Prophet begins to enter upon his affirmative marks, and the godly man begins to appear in his likeness ; for this delighting in the law of God is so essential to godliness, that it even constitutes a godly man, and gives him his being. For what is godliness but the love of God ? and what is love without delight ? that we may see what a sovereign thing godliness is, which not only brings us to delight when we come to blessedness, but brings us to blessedness by a way of delighting. For the Prophet requires not a godliness that bars us of delight ; he requires only a godliness that rectifies our delight ; for as the wrong placing our delight is the cause of all our miseries, so the right placing it is the cause of all our happiness ; and what righter placing it than to place it in the right ? and what is the right but only the law ?

But is there delight, then, in the law of God ? Is it not a thing rather that will make us melancholy ? and doth it not mortify in us the life of all joy ? It mortifies indeed the life of carnal delights, but it quickens in us another delight, as much better than those as heaven is above the earth. For there is no true delight which delights not as much to be remembered as to be felt ; which pleaseth not as well the memory as the sense ; and takes not as much joy to think of it being done as when it was a-doing. For is it not a miserable delight when it may be threatened with this : *Olim hæc meminisse pigebit ?* You will one day remember this [with pain]. Is it not a doleful delight, when *extrema gaudii luctus occupat* [grief besets the borders of gladness],—when sorrow follows it at the heels ? Is it not a fearful delight when, like a magician’s rod, it is instantly turned into a serpent ? And such are all worldly delights, either

¹ Rom. vii. 23 : “I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind.”

like that of Amnon in loving Tamar—first enjoyed, and presently loathed;¹ or like that of Cain in killing Abel:² mad to do it, and then stark mad for having done it; or like that of Esau in eating Jacob's pottage—give at first a blessing for it, and afterwards give it a thousand curses;³ or like that of Gehazi, in taking gifts of Naaman—leap for joy till we come to Elisha, and loathsome lepers all our lives after.⁴ This delight, which the Prophet here speaks of, is the only delight that neither blushes nor looks pale; the only delight that gives a repast without an after-reckoning; the only delight that stands in construction with all tenses;⁵ and (like Æneas, Anchises) carries his parents upon his back. And why should not even worldly men be sensible of this delight? They delight in gold and silver, and behold, the law is more precious than gold; yea, than much fine gold.⁶ They delight in beauty; and behold, how amiable the tabernacles of the Lord are.⁷ They delight in light; and behold, the law is a lanthorn to our feet, and a light to our paths.⁸ They delight in knowledge; and behold, through the law we have more understanding than our teachers.⁹ They delight in joy; and behold, the law is right, and rejoiceth the heart.¹⁰ They delight in long life; and behold, the law of the Lord increaseth the length of days, and the years of life!¹¹ And where are they now that are afraid of melancholy in the midst of such delights? Certainly if there be, as physicians affirm, a hellebore or a senna to purge away the melancholy and sad humours of the body, this study in the law of God is the true hellebore and senna of the soul; or rather it is the juice of the grape which David in another place speaks of, that exhilarates and "maketh glad the heart of man."¹²

And as in this study of the law of God there is no fear

¹ 2 Sam. xiii. 15. ² Gen. iv. 8 *seqq.* ³ Gen. xxv. 33; xxvii. 34. ⁴ 2 Kings v. 23—27. ⁵ Or is suitable to all times. ⁶ Ps. xix. 9, 10: "The judgments of the LORD . . . more to be desired *are they* than gold, yea, than much fine gold." ⁷ Ps. cxix. 105: "Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." ⁸ Ps. lxxxiv. 1: "How amiable *are thy* tabernacles, O LORD of hosts!" ⁹ Ps. cxix. 99: "I have more understanding than all my teachers; for thy testimonies *are my* meditation." ¹⁰ Ps. xix. 8: "The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart." ¹¹ Prov. iii. 2: "Length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee." ¹² Ps. civ. 25.

of melancholy, so in the delight that is taken in it there is no fear of satiety; all other delights must have change, or else they cloy us; must have cessation, or else they tire us; must have moderation, or else they waste us: this only delight is that of which we can never take enough—we can never be so full, but we shall leave with an appetite, or rather never leave, because ever in an appetite. It is but one, yet is still fresh; it is always enjoyed, yet always desired; or, rather, the more it is enjoyed, the more it is desired. All other delights may be barred from us, may be hindered to us; this only delight is free in prison, is at ease in torments, is alive in death; and indeed there is no delight that keeps us company in our death-beds, but only this. All other delights are then ashamed of us, and we of them; this only sits by us in all extremities, and gives us a cordial when physic and friends forsake us.

The Prophet hath taught us marks how to know a godly man; but he hath not taught us how to know these marks; and this is a special matter, for we may as well mistake the marks as mistake the man; and therefore, though we let pass the negative marks, and leave them to be taken at all adventure, yet this affirmative mark, of delighting in the law of God, would by any means be better marked. For this is an essential mark, and this mistaken might mar all, and lead us, perhaps, to Cain instead of Abel. For many delight in the law, because they which preach the gospel should live by the gospel.¹ But these are covetous men, and delight not in the law, but in profit. Many delight in the law because they desire to sit in Moses' chair; but these are ambitious men, and delight not in the law, but in honour. Many delight in the law, because it teacheth many hidden and secret mysteries; but these are vain men, and delight not in the law, but in superfluous knowledge. Many delight in the law, but only to pass away the time, as thinking it better *otiosum esse, quàm nihil agere* [to enjoy leisure than to do nothing]; but these are scandalous men, and delight not in the law, but in idle fancies.

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 14: "They which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

Many delight in the law as Neoptolemus in philosophy—*philosophandum sed paucis* [discourse philosophically, but not to many]; a little serves their turn, and if the other sorts were all of them defective in substance, this sort surely is defective in quantity: those had not the right stuff, this hath not the just measure; and so we are little the nearer yet for finding out any marks of true delighting in the law of God. And how, then, shall we come to know the delighting which is true and perfect from that which is counterfeit and defective? Shall we say, it must be a delighting only, or but only chiefly?¹ Not only, for so we should delight in nothing else; and who doubts but there are many other delights which both Nature requires, and God himself allows? therefore, not only, but chiefly; yet so chiefly as in a manner only; for chiefly is properly where there may be comparison; but this is so chiefly as admits of no comparison. In presence of this, all other delights do lose their light; in balance with this, all other delights are found to be light. And this is even intimated in the word itself used by the Prophet here, which is [יָדָה, *héphets*], and signifies a delight that takes up the whole will, and leaves no *plus ultra* [further (longing)] in our desires; which, as it only is and only can be, so it only must and only ought to be true, of our delighting in the law of God. Other delights may have their fits, but no *héphets*, but only this.² We may take delight in a care of our estates, which is a provident and therefore a commendable delight; for he that provides not for his family is worse than an infidel;³ yet it must not be our *héphets*, for *corpus aggravat animam multa cogitantem* [the body burdens the much-meditating mind]; much caring for the world makes the soul heavy, and presseth it down from ascending toward heaven. We may take delight in wife and children, which is a natural and therefore a commendable delight; for no man ever hated his own flesh;⁴ yet it must not be our *héphets*, for he that loves father or mother, wife or children, better than Christ, is not

¹ *i.e.*, chiefly, if not only. ² None have an engrossing delight, save this only.
³ 2 Tim. v. 8. ⁴ Eph. v. 29.

worthy of Christ.¹ We may take delight in bodily exercises, which is a healthful and therefore a commendable delight, for he that neglects the care of his health is within compass of being *felo de se*, a murderer of himself; yet it must not be our *hêphets*; for *nimia cura corporis est incuria animi*; too much care taken of the body, shows there is but little care taken of the mind. But why stand we angling for marks of true delighting in the law of God, when the Prophet himself gives us a mark here that may be *instar omnium* [as good as all other], a mark that never fails—that he who delights in the law of God will be *exercising himself in it day and night*; for it seems to be here, as between faith and works, that as St. James saith, Show me thy faith by thy works,² so we may say, Show me thy delighting by thy exercising. For as it is but a dead faith that brings not forth the fruit of good works,³ so it is but a feigned delight that brings not forth the work of exercising; and as it is but an unsound faith that works but intermittingly and by fits, so it is but an aguish delighting that hath its heat but at turns and seasons; but where we see a constancy of good works, as we may be bold to say there is a lively and sound faith, so where we see a continual exercising, we may be confident to say there is a true delighting. The working shows a life of faith; the constancy of working, a true temper of that life. The exercising shows a delighting; the continuance of exercising, a sincerity of that delighting.

But will not this continual exercising in the law of God get men the name of common barrators,⁴ and make them accounted troublesome fellows amongst their neighbours, as of whom it may be said they are never well but when they are going to law? Indeed, the law of man where *summum jus is summa injuria* [extreme law is extreme wrong], and where might oftentimes overcomes right, may be subject perhaps

¹ Matt. x. 37: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."

² James ii. 18: "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works."

³ James ii. 17: "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." Also ver. 20: "Faith without works is dead." * Stirrers up, or setters forward and maintainers of law-suits and quarrels. (Bailey's Eng. Dict.)

to such obloquy, but not the law of God ; for this is not a law where the weakest goes to the wall, but this law is a wall to the weakest ; the delighting in this law is not a going to law, but a law to our going, as it is said, Thy law is a light to our feet,¹ a light not only to our eyes, to make us see the right way, but to our feet also, to make us walk the right way ; and it is so far from making us to become enemies to our neighbours, that it makes us to become neighbours to our enemies ; for of this law it is said, it suffers all things, it endureth all things, it seeketh not her own,² but if any man will take our coat from us it makes us contented to let him have our cloak also.³

The delighting in the law of God is that divine contemplation by which we see God as in a glass,⁴ and is the only true way to our only true felicity, though there be men that think they can tell of better contemplations and better ways to happiness than David seems to know, or will at least acknowledge ; for if they should but name the contemplation, which is *contemplari nummos in arca* [contemplating money in a chest], or the meditation which is *meditari inania* [meditating vain things],⁵ or the pleasure of which is said, *trahit sua quemque voluptas* [every one is led by his own delight], the worst of these would be a better delight and a better way of happiness than this of David's. But these men's blindness must not lead us into the ditch ;⁶ for these delights they speak of are the very blocks that lie in our way and hinder us from happiness ; they are the very weights that hang heavy upon the soul, and keep it from rising to the true height of divine contemplation ; and if a man whose mind were once raised up to this height should afterward descend and take a view of the world, he would even be astonished to see men that pretend to reason, and would be thought wise, be so simple as to take delight in their weights, and to take a pleasure in their clogs, and so sillily to leave the delight of heavenly meditation to follow these vain and foolish things which the world admires.

¹ Ps. cxix. 105 : "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet." * 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5, 7.
² Matt. v. 40. * 1 Cor. xiii. 12 : "For now we see through a glass darkly."
³ Ps. ii. 1. * Matt. xv. 14 : "And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."

And, indeed, what but this made our Prophet here, in another place, break out into his passionate exclamation, "O ye sons of men, *how long* will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing?"¹ For look into the world, and to all things that are in the world, and see if there be anything in it (as to the purpose of making us happy) but only lies and leasings. Pleasure bears thee in hand, it can make thee happy; but it lies; for do not all pleasures hasten to their end, and that end either in sorrow or satiety? Honour vaunts it can make thee happy; but it lies; for hath honour any being but in others not being, where it is part of our happiness that others be happy? Riches make thee believe they can make thee happy; but they lie; for they cannot so much as ease the least pain of thy body, or the least anguish of thy mind. Learning persuades thee it can make thee happy; but it lies; for "in much wisdom *is* much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."² The flesh tells thee it can make thee happy; but it lies; for the worms stand waiting continually for it, and are sure ere long to have it to eat. O that men would consider this, and not put the Prophet to his exclamation, "O ye sons of men, *how long* will ye be in love with vanity, and seek after leasings?" For this indeed would be a good preparative, and but a preparative, to divine contemplation; it might serve to strew branches in the way, but not to cry Hosanna;³ for to raise the soul up to this height of contemplation, it is not enough to put off these weights that draw it down, but there must be a pulley also to draw it up, as Christ saith, No man can come unto me, except the Father draw him;⁴ and therefore many heathen philosophers could cast off these clogs, could put off these weights; for they despised riches, they scorned honours, they hated pleasures, they contemned the world, and yet for all this they could never but flutter a little in the low region of the air; they could never rise up to the firmament of contemplation; and all because they wanted this pulley, which they that delight in the law of God shall never want. For *Honorantes me honorabo*, saith God; They which

¹ Ps. iv. 2. ² Eccl. i. 18. ³ Matt. xxi. 8, 9. ⁴ John vi. 44: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him."

honour me, I will honour them ;¹ and if they delight in my law, I will delight in their study. And then, if by delighting in the law of God, we can bring God to delight in us, oh, what joy, what excessive joy, what happiness, what transcendent happiness, will this be unto us !

But why would the Prophet speak of delighting in the law of God, and not speak rather of delighting in God himself ? for this, no doubt, is a better delight, and this delight would be a greater blessedness. Is not the answer to this question made by Christ [John] himself ? If you love not your brother whom you see, how can you love God whom you do not see ?² If we delight not in the law of God which we know, how can we delight in God whom we do not know ?—not know, but as the law teacheth him unto us and sheweth him unto us. This life is but the means to a better life, and the chief delight of this life is but to delight in the means to a better life. We see God now but as in a glass,³ and though there be many glasses to see God, yet the brightest of these glasses is the law, and how then can we delight in the seeing of God if we delight not in the glass in which we may best see him ? To see him as he is,⁴ and in himself, is reserved till we shall have better eyes : these eyes we have are carnal and corruptible, and cannot see God till they have put on incorruption ;⁵ but when those eyes come, and that we shall see God face to face,⁶ then the means will give place to the substance, and then the delighting in the law of God will be turned into the delighting in God himself. Till then the Prophet, though with his Prophet's eyes he might see more himself, yet could not inform us to make us see more ; but he hath truly told us the height of our delight in this life, if the delight of our life be in the law of God.

But let the delight be what it will, it is but only contemplation, and contemplation sets but only the eyes a-work ; it leaves all the rest of the body idle. But godliness is an exercise for the whole man, both body and soul ; and there-

¹ 1 Sam. ii. 30 : "Them that honour me I will honour." ² 1 John iv. 20 : "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen ?" ³ 1 Cor. xiii. 12. ⁴ 1 John iii. 2. ⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 53. ⁶ 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

fore, not only David saith, My soul, praise thou the Lord,¹ but St. Paul saith, Make your bodies a living sacrifice;² for our godliness must be perfect, that our blessedness may be perfect; and even in heaven (if they could be separated) we should not be blessed in beholding the blessed face of God, if we did not as well glorify him in beholding him as behold his glory. Contemplation brings us but to *video meliora proboque* [I see and approve the better]; and if *deteriora sequor* [I pursue the worse] do follow, then godliness is stopped in her race at the very goal: the building is left unperfect when it is come to the roof. We cannot make a demonstration of true godliness out of all the premises, unless that be added which follows, "And in his law he will exercise himself day and night;" but if this be added, then the roof of the house is set on, and then the goal of godliness is won. And though it may seem a wearisome thing, summer and winter, day and night, all a man's life long, to do nothing else but always one thing, yet this is the godly man's task; he must do so, or he cannot be the man we take him for. For to be godly but sometimes, is to be ungodly always; and no man is so wicked but he may sometimes have good thoughts, and do good works. But this serves not our godly man's turn; his sun must never set,³ for if he ever be in darkness, he shall ever be in darkness; at least, he shall find it more work to kindle his fire anew than to have kept it still burning. For if a man should water his bed with tears all night,⁴ and go next day to the house of laughter,⁵ that man's godliness would be but as the morning dew—rise to a cloud, and so vanish.⁶ Or if he should bestow the whole day in the exercise of godliness, and yet at night return to his vomit,⁷ that man would be but as a half-moon—bright on one side, and horrid blackness on the other. For godliness is a thing entire; it cannot be had in pieces. We must have it together, or not at all; and by this a godly man is made *totus teres atque rotundus* [com-

¹ Ps. ciii. 1, 22: civ. 1, 35: "Bless the LORD, O my soul." ² Rom. xii. 1: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." ³ Isa. lx. 20. ⁴ Ps. vi. 6. ⁵ Eccl. vii. 2: "The house of feasting." ⁶ Hos. vi. 4. ⁷ Prov. xxvi. 11.

pletely smooth and round]. All the former make but lines; this only consummates godliness, and brings it to a circle.

It seems here as if the Prophet went about to make men think that the readiest way to be a happy man were to be a lawyer, if we may call him a lawyer that studieth and practiseth the law; for after his negative marks of a godly man, he comes next to this, that "his delight is in the law of the Lord," which is his studying of the law; and because a student in the law can make no benefit by it till he come to be a practiser, he therefore, by these next words, "And in his law he will exercise himself," seems to call him to the bar, and enables him to practise, that having learned the law himself, he may now teach it to others, or at leastwise practise it towards others. But is not this a paradox in David, seeing it is against our own experience? for we have known many that by the law have grown rich; many that by the law have gotten honour; many that by the law have grown famous; but we never yet knew any that by the law grew happy; for, notwithstanding their honour, their riches, their fame, yet they ever had something whereof to complain. We must therefore remember what law this is. It is not our common law, nor our canon law; it is not the civil law, nor the law of the twelve tables; it is not the law of the Medes and Persians,¹ nor the law of nations. It is the law of the Lord; a law pure and undefiled; a law that was given by angels, in the hand of a Mediator;² a law by which we shall judge,³ and by which we shall be judged.⁴ It is *imperatoria lex*; not the emperor's law, but an imperial law — *lex architectonice*, a law that gives rules to all other, and is itself ruled by none. And here now there opens itself, as it were, a *novus orbis* [a new world], for if we should enter into the main to speak of laws, we should never make an end; our best is, therefore, to keep close to David, and to go no further than he goes, and yet so we shall have law enough to make us happy. Only we may consider what these exercises are in which this godly lawyer is so diligent all day, and so vigilant all night, to exercise himself; and as

¹ Dan. vi. 8. ² Gal. iii. 19: "It was ordained by angels in the hands of a mediator."
³ 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. ⁴ Rom. ii. 12.

the marks before, so the exercises here, may be distinguished into negatives and affirmatives ; but, seeing the godly man mingles them together in his course, we may as well mingle them together in our discourse. A godly lawyer will not boast himself to know that of which he is ignorant, nor feign himself to be ignorant of that he knows. He will not discourage a man in a good cause, nor encourage him in a bad. He will not overreach a man that is shorter than himself, nor undermine a man that is shallower than himself, nor supplant a man weaker than himself. He will not rise by other men's falls, nor make a gain of other men's losses. He will give counsel to a poor man without a fee, as reckoning a poor man's cause his own, and a good conscience the best fee. If he have taken any other fee, he hath mortgaged his time, and will not sell it again till he have first redeemed it. He gives fees himself to get him clients, and grows richer by giving than others do by taking. He is ready to end suits, but not to begin them ; and he had rather want work than make it. He is glad when he can use the law, but would be more glad there were no use of it. It is a booty to him when he can find opportunity to do a good deed. If there want counsel to set forward a good cause, he gives it ; if pains or care, he takes it. He keeps his terms duly, as preserving the Sabbath day before all other days ; and yet as his piety makes every day to him a Sabbath, so his practice makes it term to him all the year long. He turns over books and searcheth records, not so much to look out dead precedents as to find out the reasons that gave life to the precedents ; for he makes it not a reason of his action that others have done so, but he makes it his actions, if he find there was reason, for the doing so. He inquires and hearkens out the poor, and relieves them ; the naked, and clothes them ; captives, and redeems them ; men oppressed, and succours them ; men that mourn, and comforts them ; men a-dying, and revives them. The law is both his study and his recreation, and one cannot tell whether it be more his work or more his pastime ; for, as the Prophet saith here, it is his exercise, so he said before, it is his delight. And it is well it is so, for without this

delight it were impossible he should ever go through with such incessant labours as are imposed upon him, or, rather, he imposeth upon himself, day and night. But delight makes burdens light, makes labours easy; which, perhaps, made Christ say that his burden was light, and his yoke easy.¹ And in this manner, indeed, if a man be a student and a practiser in the law, it will be no paradox to say, it will be no violence to the text to make David say, that the best and readiest way to be a happy man is to be a lawyer.

When it is said, "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law he will exercise himself day and night," is it not a kind of solecism² to double the word law, without any lawful occasion? It may, perhaps, be a solecism in grammar, but it is none in affection; for, therefore, he doubles the word (the law) to express the wonderful delight he takes in the law; and this is more fully expressed in Psalm cxix, where he seems so fond of the word, and so loath to leave it, that he cannot endure it should be out of his mouth, and therefore at every third or fourth word is up with it again. Or is it that he therefore doubles the word (the law), because, indeed, there is a double law, which though as a man he could not see, yet as a prophet he might foresee; and the words day and night are here joined to the later law, because although there were in the old law a *juge sacrificium* [continual sacrifice] in representation; yet there never was any *juge sacrificium* in reality and execution, but only in this later law; therefore where David speaks it as a great matter to pray his seven times a day,³ we in this law are put to our *semper orate* [pray always],⁴ and *sine intermissione orate* [pray without ceasing];⁵ continual prayer is expected from us, day and night.

But why should the Prophet require day and night to be spent in the doing of God's law? seeing, for the day, God himself allows us six days to do our own work; and for the night, there is no *opus tenebrarum*, no fit work to be done in darkness? Yet a godly man will do as the Prophet requires

¹ Matt. xi. 30. ² An error in speech. ³ Ps. cxix. 164: "Seven times a day do I praise thee." ⁴ Eph. vi. 18: "Praying always with all prayer." ⁵ 1 Thess. v. 17.

him ; he will do it in the day, that men, seeing his good works, may glorify his Father which is in heaven ;¹ and he will do it in the night, that he may not be seen of men,² and that his left hand may not know what his right hand doeth.³ He will do it in the day to show he is none of those *qui fugiunt lucem* [who shun the light] ; and he will do it in the night to show he is one of those *qui cum in tenebris micat*⁴ [who, when in darkness, shine]. He will do it in the daytime, because the day is the time of doing, as St. Peter [the Lord] saith, "Work whilst it is day ;"⁵ and he will do it in the night lest his master should come as a thief in the night⁶ and find him idle. Indeed, this day and night of David's amounts but to St. Paul's continually, Watch continually, Pray continually,⁷ for though the sun in the firmament set, and make it night to our eyes, yet the Sun of Righteousness must never set, to make it night in our hearts ; but it must be here as it was in the beginning, the evening and the morning must make but one day.⁸

The Prophet hath used much circumstance to tell us of the man that should be blessed ; and when he hath said all he can, it is all but a godly man ; and why could he not do this at first, and have saved himself and us a labour ? We cannot, perhaps, tell for what reason the Prophet did it, but we may easily tell for what reason he might do it, for many reasons may be given of it. If he had only said, A godly man is blessed, it would have made but a new business, for we should presently have asked him, And what is a godly man ? and then he must have come to this which he delivers now ; so the Prophet went the nearest way, though we may think he went about. And if he had said, A godly man is blessed, and had not told what a godly man is, it would have bred a world of controversy, for then every man would have come and put in his claim to blessedness, under pretence of godliness, and there would never have been quiet. Cain⁹ would have come and pretended devotion for making oblations and offering sacrifices to God ; Korah

¹ Matt. v. 16. ² Matt. vi. 1. ³ Matt. vi. 3. ⁴ So in original edition.
⁵ John ix. 4. ⁶ 1 Thess. v. 2. ⁷ Eph. vi. 18 : "Praying always . . . and watching thereto with all perseverance." ⁸ Gen. i. 5 (Heb. one day). ⁹ Gen. iv. 3.

and Dathan¹ would have come, and pretended zeal for opposing governors, as taking too much upon them. The Pharisee² would have come, and pretended pureness for only fasting twice a week, and giving tithes of all he possessed. Judas³ himself would have come, and pretended charity for taking care of the poor, and finding fault with the cost bestowed upon Christ; and there would have been so many pretenders to godliness, and thereupon such snatching and catching at blessedness, that if this had been suffered, both godliness would have been in danger to be adulterated, and blessedness itself to suffer violence. To stop, therefore, the mouths of these pretenders, and utterly to damn all such false claims, the Prophet proclaims here the true title, and sets down, as it were, in *terminis terminantibus* [in definite terms], how the man must be qualified that will lay claim to blessedness, for, if any of the conditions here expressed be wanting, it will be in vain to have a thought of blessedness; for this the Prophet delivers for law, and of this we may be sure there will not be anything abated.

But if the Prophet be so punctual, and require such precise performance of such precise points, he might as well have held his peace and said nothing; for what is this but to build castles in the air, to tell us of a man that should be blessed, when there never was in the world, nor ever shall be, any such man; and so, by the course he takes, blessedness must either fall to the king, by escheat,⁴ for want of a right heir, or at least *cedere primo occupanti* [pass to the first taker], for want of a lawful claimer. But the Prophet had more knowledge than these men are aware of; he had read the chronicles, and found there many such men upon record, — Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Samuel; many others. And since his time we ourselves find many recorded for such men, — Hezekiah and Josiah, kings of Judah; Zacharias and Elizabeth of later time. It is, therefore, but a mere scandal; blessedness can never want an heir, for in all ages past there have been such men, and, by God's grace, are

¹ Numb. xvi. 1—3. ² Luke xviii. 12. ³ John xii. 4, 5. ⁴ A writ for the recovery of any land or profits that fall to a lord within his manor, either by forfeiture or the death of a tenant without heirs. (Bailey, Eng. Dict.)

many such at this day, and shall be many such in the ages to come, as long as the world shall last, for the devil must not have all; God will have his congregation; and that must consist of such as are here described, a "congregation of the righteous."¹

And now we may say, the Prophet hath, as it were, his prize; he hath set a spell² to all posterity for a perfect description; for though some may think that Xenophon, in his Instruction of Cyrus, and Cicero, in his description of an orator, have become his equals, yet let the matter be examined fairly, and we shall find that the Prophet here, in a few plain words, hath made a perfecter godly man than either Xenophon a prince, or Cicero an orator, with all their long elaborate discourses.

The Prophet set "blessed" as it were a sign at the entrance of his Psalm; and where blessed is hung out for a sign, we might be sure to find a godly man within; and so he hath well quitted himself of the first part of his proposition in showing us what a godly man is; and now, if he can quit himself as well of the second part, in showing us that he is blessed, we shall then say he hath truly played his prize indeed, and worthily deserves to be called the godly man's champion; for in so doing he shall set a more glorious crown upon a godly man's head than that which Samuel set upon his. He is blessed; *and he shall be like a tree.* [ver. 3.]

But here, by the way, we may observe a grammatical difference which the Prophet intimates between blessedness and godliness; for to blessedness he assigns but only two tenses or times; a present tense, He is blessed; and a future, He shall be like a tree. Preterperfect tense, he assigns none; for indeed, *fuisse felicem miserrimum est* [to have been happy is most unhappy]; and to say *fuimus Troes* [we were Trojans], is as much as to say, We are not so now. That which is past is dead in time; and in the body of true happiness there must be, there can be, no dead flesh. But to godliness he assigns three tenses or times:³ a preterperfect tense, That hath [not] walked in the counsel of the ungodly; a present tense, His delight is in the law of the

¹ Ps. i. 5.² Challenge.³ In the Vulgate.

Lord ; and a future, In his law he will exercise himself ; for godliness is a habit, and cannot be had but by often repetition and reiteration of actions ; that if the time past do not prompt and give example to the present, and the present to the future, we may have flashes of godliness, but a true habit of godliness we can never have.

And here now the Prophet begins to show himself a prophet, and to speak like a prophet : all he had said before, he might have spoken as a doctor of the law, for they were but caveats and informations to godliness. This he speaks now, he could not speak but as a prophet, for he comes to speak of things to come, and what shall become of the godly, and of the wicked, in the times hereafter ; and this, neither doctor of law, nor yet astrologer, nor any human artist could do, but only a prophet of God. And we may not the less believe him because he speaks of future things, which to man's understanding are always uncertain ; seeing he speaks it not as of himself, or as having learned it of men ; but he speaks it as taught by God, with whom all future things are present, all things to come as come already. For these prophets of God had, as I may say, perspective glasses, given them by God, in which they could see things afar off, and far off both in place and time ; and we may be allowed to call them glasses, seeing themselves were called *videntes*, seers, as seeing the things they were to speak ; and then prophets, foretellers, as communicating that to others which in their glasses they saw themselves. And as themselves were called *videntes*, seers, so their work or faculty was called *visio*, or seeing ; and yet in this there was distinction, for not every prediction of a Prophet was called *visio*, a vision, but such only as came with joyful tidings ; for when they came with heavy news, it was not properly called *visio*, a vision, but *onus*, a burden ; and our Prophet here sings both tunes,—he hath *visionem*, a vision, for the godly ; and *onus*, a burden, presently after, for the wicked ; but he tells his vision, his good news, first ; and this it is—A godly man shall be like a tree.

But is this such good news for a godly man ? must this be the height of a godly man's expectation, to be like a tree ?

Will the Prophet serve us thus,—make us take such pains for godliness, and bear us all this while in hand, that by being godly we shall be happy, and now bring us to no better a happiness than to be like a tree? If he would needs use a similitude, could he by his glass make no better choice, or is a godly man's happiness no better worth than to liken him to a tree?—a tree, which grows out of the earth, and creeps into the earth?—a tree, that is exposed to wind and weather?—a tree, that is subject to worms and cankers?—a tree, that for all its being planted by the water, is sure at last to come to the fire? But we must not, with our ignorance, lay aspersion upon the Prophet's knowledge, (for it is not the worthiness of the subject, in a similitude, that dignifies the thing that is compared to it; for what honour was it to Nebuchadnezzar that he was likened to Lucifer,¹ the morning star? or what more did Christ express of the kingdom of heaven by comparing it to a pearl, than by comparing it to a grain of mustard seed?)² but it is the good qualities in which they sympathise; and of such good qualities we shall find so many in a tree, that happiness may think itself happy to be compared to it; for was it not a tree that bore the fruit of life in the Garden of Eden?³—was it not a tree that bore the Lord of life,⁴ in the field of Golgotha? O happy tree! well worthy to be made the similitude of our happiness, which was the instrument to procure our happiness. But we need not to go so far to show the worth of the comparison; there are circumstances enough in a tree itself that may sufficiently justify the Prophet's choice, for though a tree be but dust in substance, and have the lower part fixed in the earth, yet it riseth above the earth, and hath boughs and branches aspiring towards heaven, transformed into a substance as though they were no earth, expressing plainly the condition of the godly, who though they be of earthy mould, and dwell in houses of clay, yet their aspiring is to heaven, and their con-

¹ Isa. xiv. 12: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!"

² Matt. xiii. 31, 45: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed," etc. . . . "like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls," etc. ³ Gen. ii. 9; iii. 22. ⁴ Acts v. 30.

fidence is to be transformed into the image of Christ, and to have their bodies made like to his glorious body.¹

But this is a common resemblance that may be found in every tree ; the Prophet here sets his similitude closer upon a godly man than that *ex quovis ligno fiat Mercurius* [a god may be made out of any log] ; every tree will not serve to do it ; but as before he delivered certain characters to know what a godly man is, so here he delivers certain marks to know what kind of tree it is that must make his similitude ; for it is not a tree that grows up wildly of itself, as having no other education but nature, but it is *planted* by an artificial hand, and as it were civilized by transplanting ; and it is not planted amongst rocky cliffs where it may be choked with drought, and where it must eat stones, or else be starved, but it is planted *by the waters'* side, where it hath drink to its meat, and where the soil is made supple, to give the root readily both passage and nourishment. And it is not a barren, vain-glorious tree, that makes only a show, and is nothing but words, as bearing nothing but leaves ;² but it is a just-performing tree, that follows his leaves with fruit, as a just man's deeds do follow his words. Neither is it an unseasonable tree, that brings forth abortive fruits, and sets our teeth on edge with sourness ; but it goes the full time out, and nourisheth the fruit up till it hath gotten sweetness by maturity, and tastes most pleasantly. And that we may know it to be no ordinary tree, the very leaves continue still, and do not wither.

But what matter is it, when the fruit is gathered, whether the leaves continue still or no ? For the work the leaves come about, is but to defend the buds, and to keep the young fruits from the violence of the sun and wind ; and when they have seen them brought up and come to a ripe age, that they can shift for themselves, the leaves then may take their leave, as we see them fall away by one and one, as taking notice that their work is done. There are, perhaps, some barren trees that bear no fruit, and these sometimes have leaves continuing still, and hanging on, both

¹ Phil. iii. 21 : "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." ² Matt. xxi. 19 : "Nothing thereon, but leaves only."

summer and winter, as if they stayed waiting for employment, and looking still when fruits would bud forth, but with as idle an expectation as the Jews stand waiting for the coming of their Messiah. But this is not the case of our leaves here, which therefore continue still, because they are still in office; for our tree bears fruit continually, and therefore hath need of leaves continually: when one fruit is ripe and gone, another is green and coming on; and therefore the leaves, which are necessary attendants upon the fruits as long as there are young fruits that need attendants, cannot be discharged, and therefore do not wither. And yet, perhaps, the Prophet had a further reason why he would give the leaf a place in the similitude of a godly man's happiness, seeing a leaf was the first angel of liberty to the prisoners in the ark;¹ their daybreak of comfort came from the light of a leaf; and if it had not been for a leaf, the tyrannizing waters would have more kept their minds in the dark than their bodies in the ark, and have drowned them with despair, when they could not with their waves; and when the waters overcame all other creatures, both men and beasts, yet the leaf continued constant to the tree, and overcame the waters; and as it perished not in the inundation of the world, no more shall it wither in the conflagration of the world.

But what happiness can a godly man expect from this similitude of a tree? for he can have no more than the similitude will afford. He can look for no more than the tree hath itself; and where hath the tree any resemblance of happiness in anything that is here expressed? It hath none in being planted by the water's side; for happiness is *sum-mum bonum* [the chief good], and this at most but *inferius bonum* [an inferior good]; therefore only good because it serves to do the tree good; it hath none in bringing forth fruit, for happiness is *bonum proprium* [one's own good], and this but *bonum alienum* [the good of another]; for what good is it to the tree to bring forth fruit for others to gather? for so the tree shall be no happier than a bee,

¹ Gen. viii. 12.

that makes honey indeed, but for others to eat; a godly man shall be no happier than a sheep, that bears wool indeed, but for others to shear; and for anything appears yet, a godly man, by this similitude, is like to lose his happiness. But the Prophet cannot be so much mistaken; the similitude, therefore, would be better looked into: for there is *felicitas medii* and *felicitas finis* [a happiness of the means and of the end]; there is *felicitas via* and *felicitas patriæ* [a happiness of the journey and of the home-land]; and this tree, indeed, enjoys them all. It hath in this life *felicitatem medii* and *felicitatem via*, in being planted by the water side, for this moistens, cools, cleanses, and gives an easy and a happy passage to the journey's end. It shall have in the life hereafter *felicitatem finis* and *felicitatem patriæ*, in bringing forth fruit; for this shall not be as the bee makes honey for others to eat, nor as the sheep bears wool for others to shear; but this fruit shall be for its own use only, and only for itself to gather; for this fruit is that of which Christ saith, Your joy shall be full, and none shall be able to take it from you.¹ Your joy shall be full; there is *plena felicitas* [a complete bliss]; and none shall be able to take it from you; there is *secura felicitas* [a secure bliss]. And now the Prophet need not be ashamed of choosing his similitude; the godly man need not be afraid of losing his happiness.

But is it not strange to see how contrary the Prophet proceeds here, to our expecting? for when he propounded his similitude of a tree, we looked he should have begun at the top boughs, which are the highest parts, and commonly bear the ripest fruits; and he begins clean contrary, at the lowest part, at the very root; for, indeed, although the root be not seen of men, and have no outward glory, yet it is the root that gives the praise to the tree; it is the root the tree may thank for all he is worth; for though the branches bring the fruits, yet they are but messengers; it is the root that sends them; and indeed if there be not a root of humility, and that root planted by grace, the aspiring

¹ John xvi. 22: "Your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."
 er. 24: "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

boughs are but sprigs of pride, and will never bring forth the fruit of glory.

We looked he should have set our tree, if not in *torrida zona*, in the very fire, yet at least in some sunny place, as it were by the fire's side; and he sets it, clean contrary, by the water's side; for, indeed, a tree fears nothing so much as want of moisture: it can ill spare the radiancy of the sun, but it can worse spare the moistening of the water, for death hath a spite at nothing so much in anything as at the *humidum radicale*, the natural moisture. He kills more with the drought of too little moisture, than with the drought of too much heat or cold; for this is a dart which death hath from nature; all his other darts are from violence; and though the water be external to the tree, yet when it enters and moistens the root it becomes radical.¹ And it may not be the least reason why the Prophet sets the tree, which is our symbol of eternal life, by the water's side, seeing the water seems the most productive element of life, as that which produced the first living creatures² that were in the world; although we may raise our thoughts yet higher, and remember there are waters as well above the firmament as under the earth;³ and there indeed must the tree be planted that shall bring forth the fruit of our expected happiness.

We looked he should have set our tree, like the trees of Eden, with present fruits hanging upon them; and he talks of tarrying the time till the tree bring them forth; for indeed our Eden is past. There was at first no time there, and therefore the fruits there were not children of time, but as soon born as their parent the tree. But we are in a world of time; our tree will bear no fruit but by the help of time; and no help of time neither, till the fulness of time come; and that is only in him who came in the fulness of time.⁴ For Christ is our time, and our fulness of time will be when we shall meet Christ full in the air, and be taken with him into the new Eden, where time shall be no more, and where our tree shall bring forth fruit in the present tense, which shall never fade into preterperfect tense.

¹ Essential.² Gen. i. 20.³ Gen. i. 7.⁴ Gal. iv. 4.

But seeing the Prophet meant afterwards to make chaff a similitude of the wicked, why would he take a tree for his similitude of the godly, and not rather take wheat, as in a plainer opposition ; and as Christ, it seems upon better advice, did take it afterwards ?¹ Christ indeed took wheat for a similitude of the godly, but to another purpose. The purpose of the Prophet here is to show the great distance that shall be of glory between the godly and the wicked ; and in the points of glory we shall find the wheat to come far short and to be far inferior to a tree ; for the wheat, though it rise flourishing up, yet it riseth out of the ground but the same it was cast into the ground ; but the tree, of a little, small seed, riseth up to a substance that one could never have expected such an issue for such a parent. The wheat, though it rise flourishing up, yet it riseth but to a small height, as loth to leave the earth too much, and afraid to go too far from the root ; but the tree riseth up to an eminent height, as scarce acknowledging the root from which it springs, and far surmounts all growing things upon the earth. The wheat, though it rise flourishing up, yet it riseth but to a slender small stalk, that quakes and trembles at the voice of the wind ; but the tree riseth up to a vast and firm body, that scorns the threatenings of the wind, and is not once moved for all the wind can do. The wheat, though it rise flourishing up, it is quickly down again : if it be not reaped in summer, it dies in winter ; but the tree is a laster for many ages, and of all things that grow out of the earth comes nearest to everlastingness.

And now, if we cannot choose but think it a blessed thing to be such a tree, we cannot, as little, choose but think it a blessed thing to be a godly man ; for whatsoever is seen or said of this tree, is true, and more true, of a godly man. He is more fixed and immovable than this tree, for where this tree is rooted but in the earth, a godly man is founded upon a rock.² He is planted by a better gardener than this tree, for where this tree is planted but by Adam, a natural

¹ Matt. iii. 12 : "He will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner ; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (Cf. Luke iii. 17.)
² Ps. xxvii. 5.

man, a godly man is planted by Paul,¹ or rather, as Christ saith, by God himself.² He is moistened with better waters than this tree, for where this tree is watered but by springs from the earth, a godly man is watered with the dew of heaven. He riseth to a greater height than this tree, for where this tree is stunted in its rising, and stays in the air, a godly man riseth up, and never stays till he come at heaven. He bears more fruit than this tree, for where this tree hath many leaves besides fruits, the very leaves of a godly man are themselves fruits. He is longer in season than this tree; for where this tree is in season but some part of the year, godliness is in season all the year long. This tree is in season but for a time, but godliness is in season to all eternity.

The similitude of a tree is sufficiently justified, but why would the Prophet express happiness by any similitude at all, and not deliver it rather in the very substance? Why would he not rather tell us what it is, than what it is like? May we not be bold to say, because it was more than he could do? for seeing the happiness of a godly man is such as neither eye hath seen nor ear heard,³ certainly we may conclude it is such also as neither words can express nor tongue utter. And if we should heap up words upon words, laying Pelion upon Ossa,⁴ and making mountains of volumes, yet we should never be able to express the happiness ordained by God for godly men. If the happiness consisted of finite parts, and were a stunted thing, either in number, or magnitude, or continuance, we might by the help of arithmetic and geometry express it, perhaps, in some proportion; but seeing it consists of parts, in number innumerable, in magnitude infinite, in continuance eternal, what man of art, what art of man, can now come near it? Or if the happiness were to continue but so many thousand years as there be sands in the sea, though this were a vast incomprehensible extension of time, yet it were but a continuance that would not continue; there would one day be an end. But seeing it shall be for ever, everlasting, eternal—in *eternum et ultra*

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 6.² Matt. xv. 13.³ 1 Cor. ii. 9.⁴ Mountains in Greece.

[for ever and evermore]—what stars of heaven, what sands of the sea, can now be counters enough to sum it? And now tell me if the Prophet were not well advised to make use of a similitude; but tell me, rather, if godly men be not well advised to make use of godliness; tell me, if wicked men be not ill advised to make account of vanities; oh, tell me, if the serpent be not a devil, the flesh a traitor, the world an impostor, that, for pleasures of sin, not worth the speaking of, would make us to forfeit this unspeakable happiness.

But now to consider it in allegory, what may we think is meant by this tree? Is it not the tree figured by the tree of life in the garden of Eden?¹ And what by this planting?—our ingrafting into Christ.² And what by this water's side?—the water that was shed out of Christ's side.³ And what by this fruit?—our everlasting happiness. And what by these leaves?—the leaf of a good conscience, and the leaf of a good fame; for a good conscience never withers, but accompanies a godly man to another world; and a good fame never withers, but *in memoria aeterna erit justus* [the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance].⁴ And what by the time? when time is no more; for time is but the measure of motion and mutation, but happiness hath nothing to do with these, and therefore nothing to do with time; her time is eternity.

And indeed is it not strange that men who have outlived yesterday should think there can be happiness where there is time? For let the day past be spent in all the pleasures of the world, yet what is yesterday to us to-day? and what will to-day be to us to-morrow? and so the days of happiness should come at last to be all lost, and be no more to us than if they never had been ours; wherein in true happiness, to-day is to us as it was yesterday, and to-morrow will be as it is to-day, and what we are now we shall be for ever. Time and happiness are things incompatible; for happiness is permanent, time always in mutation; for what is time but a very changeling, or, rather, makes very change-

¹ Gen. ii. 9.² Rom. xi. 17—24.³ John xix. 34.⁴ Ps. cxli. 6.

lings of us? It is long¹ of time that we continue not long in one state; it is always bringing some new thing, but ever carries away more of the old; it runs over all things, but never tarries with any; we cannot see it till it be gone out of sight; and by this only we find it hath been here, because we find not that here which hath been. The happiness of this life is like Joseph's coat, parti-coloured,² to express variableness, a mixture of weal and woe, but turns at last all to a stain; and such happiness wicked men may have. The true happiness is in a long white robe;³ long for durableness, and white for joyfulness; and this keeps the colour still, and is only to be had in heaven;⁴ for there this changeling, time, shall not be suffered to come, to set diversity of colours upon our robe of happiness.

And now, if any man ask for happiness, here it is; it grows upon the tree of godliness; but though it have its beginning, and as it were its blooming, in this life, yet it comes not to its growth till another life. This present world is too cold a climate to bring it to ripeness; it must have the sun to shine more directly upon it. We have here *spem rei* [the hope of its substance], but shall not have *rem spei* [the substance of our hope], till we come to see⁵ the blessed face of God; for this indeed is the true sun that only can bring the fruit of this tree to its full maturity.

But is not this hard dealing in the Prophet, to make us promise of a present possession of blessedness, and now turn us off with little more than a bare reversion? Will he be so a prophet as that he will be no more than a prophet, — tell us only of things to come, and not keep his word in things present? It was his saying, at the very first, that a godly man is blessed; and seeing he thought good to say it then, we look he should make it good and show it now; for as yet there appears but little to make it appear that the godly are in this life any more blessed than the wicked; and if any advantage be, it seems to most men to be of the

¹ Because. ² Gen. xxxvii. 3. ³ Cf. Dan. vii. 9: "The Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow," etc., with Rev. i. 13: "Clothed with a garment down to the foot." ⁴ Rev. iii. 5: "The same shall be clothed in white raiment." ⁵ 1 John iii. 2: "We shall see him as he is."

wicked's side. But is not this rather to deal hardly with the Prophet, to put him to his proofs for every word he speaks, as though the word of a prophet were not of itself an authority sufficient to command our assent? But since we are so hard of belief, at least, *propter duritiam cordis* [because of the hardness of our hearts], let it be considered that there is great difference between having of blessings and being blessed. A wicked man may have many, perhaps very many, blessings, and yet it shall never be truly said of him that he is blessed; for who doubts but that strength and beauty, riches and honours, are blessings and the good gifts of God? And all these, and many more than these, a man may have, and yet walk in the counsel of the ungodly, and stand in the way of sinners, and sit in the chair of scorners; and he that doth such things, the Prophet would have us know, though he be as strong as Samson, though as beautiful as Absalom, though as rich as Solomon, though as full of blessings as the world can make him, yet he cannot be blessed. Such things may entitle men, *benedicti* [endowed with blessings], perhaps, but not *beati* [blessed]; or, if *beati*, it is but *falso clamore* [in lying words]. The true blessedness is nowhere found growing, nor can anywhere be made to grow, but only upon this tree of godliness; and therefore you shall never hear any such word to come from David, as to say, Blessed are the rich, or Blessed are the honourable and great men of the world; but all his blessedness is ever with some relation or other unto godliness. Blessed are they whose sins are forgiven.¹ Here godliness is made legitimate.² Blessed is he whom the Lord chasteneth.³ Here godliness is set to school. Blessed are they who walk in the law of the Lord.⁴ Here godliness is at its exercise. Blessed is the man that considereth the poor.⁵ Here godliness is making a purchase. Blessed is he that putteth his trust in the Lord.⁶ Here

¹ Ps. xxxii. 1: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." ² Dependent on the law. ³ Ps. xciv. 12: "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD." ⁴ Ps. cxix. 1: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD." ⁵ Ps. xli. 1: "Blessed is he that considereth the poor." ⁶ Ps. lxxxiv. 12: "O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee."

godliness is taken sanctuary; and so godliness ever, in one kind or other, or blessedness never, in any kind whatsoever. Not all the smiths of Egypt, not all the temporal blessings of the world, will serve the turn; godliness must turn the key, or the door of blessedness, the gate for the King of glory to enter,¹ will never be opened.

And as a man may have many blessings, and yet not be blessed, so he may want many blessings, and nevertheless be perfectly blessed. He may want the riches of worldly pomp, and yet be blessed; for "Blessed are the poor in spirit;"² and this was David's case with Michal.³ He may want a quiet life, and yet be blessed; for "Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake;"⁴ and this was David's case with Saul. He may want good report, and yet be blessed; for "Blessed are ye when men rail upon you and revile you;"⁵ and this was David's case with Shimei.⁶ But is not this strange, that a man should want, and yet be perfect? should want blessings, and yet be perfectly blessed? Indeed, no more strange than that Adam should lose one of his ribs,⁷ and yet continue a perfect body still; for these temporal blessings are to a godly man as the rib was to Adam of which Eve was made, not superfluous to him when he had it, nor making him defective when he wanted it; and so are all temporal blessings, not superfluous to a godly man to have them, because he can make good use of having them; nor making him defective to want them because he can make good use of wanting them. And this, perhaps, might make St. Paul to say, I can want, and I can abound;⁸ as much as to say, I can have a rib more or a rib less, and yet in both estates continue perfect still.

But is it not, then, that we are all this while mistaken in blessedness, and that David hath set a gloss upon it, to make us esteem more highly of it than there is cause? seeing

¹ Ps. xxiv. 7, 9. ² Matt. v. 3. ³ 1 Sam. xviii. 23: "Seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son-in-law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?" ⁴ Matt. v. 10. ⁵ Matt. v. 11: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." ⁶ 2 Sam. xvi. 5-8. ⁷ Gen. ii. 21. ⁸ Phil. iv. 12: "I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."

Christ, who knew blessedness better than David, proclaims it openly that they are blessed that mourn;¹ and surely mourning can make but an untoward blessedness; for what is mourning but a deploring of misery? That to say, They are blessed that mourn, is all one as to say, They are blessed that are miserable; and so, blessedness no such goodly thing as David goes about to make us think it. But it is not that we mistake blessedness; the mistaking is in mistaking Christ's speaking of blessedness; for Christ saith not, They are blessed that mourn, because they mourn, but because they shall be comforted. The blessedness consists in the comforting, not in the mourning; and not all neither that mourn shall be comforted, for then the damned in hell, and even the devil himself, than whom there is not a greater mourner, should come at last (as some have erred to think) to have their shares in comfort. But their mourning is in despair and upon wrong causes. They only shall be comforted that mourn upon just cause, and that in hope; and such are only the saints on earth who mourn for the Bridegroom's departing from them,² and cry with St. Paul, I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.³ Indeed, comforting is to mourning a plain relative,⁴ and cannot be without it, for where no mourning is, there can be no comforting; for what is comforting but a wiping away of tears from the eyes, and how can tears be wiped away if there be no tears to wipe away? And seeing the Holy Ghost (the author of all blessedness) is the Comforter,⁵ and no comforting where no mourning, it follows that where no mourning, no Holy Ghost, and where no Holy Ghost, no blessedness. Therefore, Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. And so, between Christ and David there will be found but this difference, that David seems to consider godliness as a jubilee, and therefore expresseth it by delighting in the law of God, and exercising in it; but Christ seems to consider it as a funeral,

¹ Matt. v. 4. ² Matt. ix. 15: "Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast." ³ Phil. i. 23: "Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ." ⁴ Correlative. ⁵ John xiv. 26: "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost."

and therefore expresses it by mourning, as by which a godly man is crucified to the world, and the world to him.¹ And, indeed, this jubilee, and this funeral, must both meet in a godly man, or there will not be a godliness that can produce a blessedness; but where these two meet and kiss each other,² there the delighting in the law of God will cause a mourning for our sins, and the mourning for our sins will cause a joy in the Holy Ghost,³ that we may be confident to say we have a comfortable blessedness, seeing we have the blessing of the Holy Ghost the Comforter. And now, if any man slight this joy as not deserving the name of blessedness, is it not because he feels it not in himself? for without being felt, it is not possible to be understood; but he that feels it and understands it will find this joy to be that jewel which the wise merchant sold all that he had to buy;⁴ for what avails it a man to enjoy the whole world,⁵ and to want this joy? for this joy is not an influence from the stars, which yet can do great wonders for breeding joy in the world, but it is an influence from that spirit which moved upon the waters,⁶ before the stars were made, and is only able still to move upon the waters, and to remove the waters of a weeping soul. It is a joy begotten in our hearts by motion of the Holy Ghost, which, moving upon the waters of a true repentance, works in us the joy of this assurance, that we have an Advocate and Intercessor for us with God the Father;⁷ which joy was thought so great, when time was, that no messenger was thought fit to bring the news of it but an angel from heaven: Behold, I bring you tidings of great joy;⁸ and great indeed it must needs be which an angel calls great, that scarcely would call the whole earth great; and seeing St. Paul exhorts us to rejoice evermore,⁹ we may know the joy to be exceeding great that can make us able to hold out rejoicing so long together, in

¹ Gal. vi. 14: "By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."
² Ps. lxxxv. 10: "Righteousness and peace have kissed each other."
³ Rom. xiv. 17. ⁴ Matt. xiii. 45, 46: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls," etc. ⁵ Matt. xvi. 26: "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" ⁶ Gen. i. 2. ⁷ John ii. 1: "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." ⁸ Rom. viii. 26: "The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us." ⁹ Luke ii. 20: "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold I bring you good tidings of great joy." ¹⁰ 1 Thess. v. 16.

all tempests and calms, in all actions and passions; joy enough to maintain a feast of rejoicing all our life long. And then, if this joy can make a blessedness (as certainly a greater cannot be had on earth), and none partakers of it but the godly, we must needs confess the Prophet had great reason to make it his challenge, and that in the present tense : A godly man is blessed.

And will not this blessedness appear yet plainer if we consider the divers sorts of blessedness? for there is a blessedness of the law, and this was delivered by Moses, who, delivering the law but *in litera* [in the letter], delivers a blessedness but *in cortice* [in the bark] : Blessed shalt thou be in the field, and blessed in the city, blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy cattle,¹ etc. There is a blessedness of grace, and this was delivered by Aaron, who being the minister of our atonement with God delivers a blessedness in this atonement :² The Lord bless thee, and keep thee ; the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be merciful unto thee ; the Lord lift his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.³ And there is a blessedness of glory, and this was delivered by Christ, who being himself the perfection of blessedness, delivers a blessedness in perfection : Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit a kingdom prepared for you.⁴ And now that we have these divers sorts of blessedness laid out before us, which of them, may we think, was thought upon by David in saying, Blessed is the man? Not Moses' blessedness, for that is too imperfect; nor yet Christ's blessedness, for that is too consummate. Moses' blessedness is imperfect; for gold (one of the best of his blessings) hath commonly proved but *aurum Tolosanum*,⁵ ominous to the owners, and apt to bring them to utter ruin; at most, to blessedness it hath never been but neutral, only as a cipher in arithmetic, no

¹ Deut. xxviii. 3, *seqq.*

² Reconciliation.

³ Numb. vi. 24—26 : "The LORD bless thee, and keep thee : the LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee : the LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

⁴ Matt. xxv. 34.

⁵ The gold of Toulouse or *Tolosa* : the temples of this city had immense treasures of both gold and silver. Q. Servilius Caepio seized the enormous booty, and owing, as was thought, to the anger of the gods, was in the following year defeated and taken by the Cimbri. His goods were sold, and he himself died in prison.

value but from the placing it; for if it be placed in a godly hand, it serves *in subsidium virtutis* [as a succour to virtue], and may prove a means for augmentation of blessedness; but if it fall to be the lot of the wicked, it is but *incentivum vitiorum* [an origin of faults], and serves but *in majorem damnationem*, for an augmentation of misery. And as Moses' blessedness is too imperfect, so Christ's blessedness is too consummate; for the blessed face of God (in which that blessedness chiefly consists) is no fit object for corruptible eyes. God must make himself *capabilis* [receptible], which now he is not, and us *capaces* [receptive], which now we are not, before we can arrive at the haven of that blessedness. And so, Moses' blessedness being suspended, and Christ's blessedness not yet to be expected, what remains but that we lay hold on Aaron's blessedness? and this, indeed, we shall find to sympathise and suit well with this of David; for Aaron's blessedness is a confidence in God's mercy for remission of sins, and a peace of conscience in being at peace with God in Christ. And it is no wrong to Aaron's peace to add "in Christ," for though Aaron express it not, as speaking it, but in figure, yet we may well think he understands it, as meaning it in substance, seeing no peace without Christ is safe unto us. All peace without him is but dangerous security; for *Christus est pax nostra*, he only is our peace,¹ and this peace he hath ever used as his proper good. It was the present he brought the apostles at his coming from hell: "Peace be unto you;"² and it was the legacy he left the apostles at his going to heaven: My peace I leave with you.³ This peace made Job upon the dunghill blessed, and the want of this peace made Saul upon his throne miserable; this peace the world cannot give, and the wicked cannot have; for there is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord.⁴ And now, if any man slight this peace, as not thinking it to deserve the title of blessedness, is it not because he hath no feeling of it in himself? for, not being felt, it can never

¹ Eph. ii. 14. ² Luke xxiv. 36. ³ John xiv. 27: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." ⁴ Isa. xlviii. 22: "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked." Cf. Isa. lvii. 21.

be understood; but he that feels and understands it will find this peace to be that purchase which Christ so dearly bought for us with his precious blood, and is that in substance which Aaron's peace was but in figure, for to this peace it is not enough to have a *nil conscire sibi*, a clear conscience in us, seeing St. Paul knew nothing by himself, yet was not thereby justified;¹ but we are justified by faith in Christ, and thus justified we have peace with God,² and being at peace with God we have peace of conscience within ourselves. And then, if this peace can make a blessedness (as certainly a greater cannot be in earthly tabernacles), and none partakers of it but the godly, we may speak it as well from Paul as from David or Aaron; and so priest and prophet, apostle and all, agree in this, A godly man is blessed.

And if we take another way to go, will it not come to all one journey's end? only, as having now taken the Prophet's words in this manner, A godly man is blessed, and he shall be like a tree, there have appeared two distinct blessednesses, one present and another future; so if we take the words in this manner (as some will have it), A godly man is blessed, for he shall be like a tree, there will then appear but one main blessedness, the present being only a hope of the future; and yet thus it shall still be justly said, A godly man is blessed; for this hope is not wavering that may make ashamed,³ seeing it hath faith to guard it, and patience to wait upon it, but it is the anchor of the soul⁴ that keeps it upright in all tempests of temptations. And if we pass from the hope itself to that which is hoped for, oh, then, how transcendent a blessedness will be found in hope! for is it not an armour of steel against all blows of fortune and wracks of time, that I have hope continually to stand prompting me with this: *Durate et vosmet rebus servate secundis* [endure and keep yourselves for better days]; Be constant to the end, and be assured it will not be long ere thou shalt reign with Christ? Is it not a shield of brass against all the terrors of death and hell, that through hope I

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 4.² Rom. v. 1.³ Rom. v. 5.⁴ Heb. vi. 19.

can say with Job, I know that my Redeemer liveth, and though that worms destroy this body, yet I shall one day see God in my flesh?¹ but most of all, is it not a rock of defence against all afflictions in body or goods, against all disgraces in fame or fortunes, that with St. Paul I can say in hope, There is a crown of righteousness laid up for me, which the just Judge will give me at the last day?² And now, if any man slight this hope, as thinking it not worthy the name of a blessedness, is it not because he hath no feeling of it in himself? for not being felt, it cannot be understood; but he that feels and understands it shall find that this hope is the true cordial of a fainting soul; as David saith, I had fainted if I had not hoped to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.³ And then, if such a cordial it be, as such a cordial most certainly it is, and none partakers of it but the godly, we may justly conclude the Prophet had just cause to make it his conclusion, A godly man is blessed.

And yet more expressly to show the dignity of a godly man's blessedness, we may observe that as, *ratione personarum* [with respect to persons], God is said to be the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,⁴ so, *ratione rerum* [with respect to things], he is said by St. Paul to be the God of joy, the God of peace,⁵ the God of hope,⁶ that we cannot think much to have a blessedness made us up of those things, of which St. Paul thinks not much, to make up God himself a title.

The joy which Abraham took when his sacrificed son, Isaac,⁷ was restored to him alive, was no doubt a wonderful joy, yet but a type of ours, that Christ, the true Isaac, is restored to us alive by his rising again. The peace of mind⁸ which Simeon felt when he bare the babe Jesus carnally in his arms was, no doubt, a blessed peace, yet but an inchoation of ours,⁹ who bear the man Christ Jesus (our full

¹ Job xix. 25, 26: "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." ² 2 Tim. iv. 8: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day." ³ Ps. xxvii. 13: "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." ⁴ Exod. iii. 6. ⁵ Phil. iv. 9. ⁶ Rom. xv. 13. ⁷ Gen. xxii. 12, 13. ⁸ Luke ii. 29. ⁹ Beginning.

reconcilement) spiritually in our hearts. The hope which Jacob had,¹ to enjoy the beautiful Rachel, was a comfortable hope, yet but a shadow of ours, who hope to enjoy the transcendent beauty of the blessed face of God in the kingdom of heaven. And shall not the truth of joy make us more blessed than the type made Abraham? Shall not the consummation of peace make us more blessed than the inchoation made Simeon? Shall not the substance hoped for² make us more blessed than the shadow made Jacob? Oh, then, the happiness of a godly man, in whom these blessings are all united, which, singly enjoyed, made such mirrors of blessedness,—a joy in the Holy Ghost³ which no temptation of Satan can dismay, a peace of conscience which no worldly tumult can disturb, a hope of heaven which no delay of expectation can discourage! And now let Solomon tell us if this be not a wreath of three that far exceeds his threefold cord,⁴ and can never be broken. And if, again, to this wreath of three we add a fourth (as the Prophet is going about to do), the blessedness of prosperity, will it not then be a blessedness with admiration, and a wreath of four that we can never say, *O terque, quaterque, beatus*, [O thrice, yea four times blessed!] so justly of anything under heaven as of a godly man, that not only we may proclaim it in Gath, and publish it in Askelon,⁵ A godly man is blessed, but with the asseveration of Isaac, in blessing Jacob, even to Esau's face, redouble it in the ears of all the wicked: A godly man is blessed; "yea, and he shall be blessed."⁶

And now that we have found out a godly man *in hypothesis* [in definition], where may we look to find him out *in thesis* [in realized fact]? Not amongst the heathen philosophers, for their peace of conscience was only *nil conscire sibi* [being conscious of no guilt]; they knew nothing of any reconcilement with God in Christ. Not amongst the Turkish Mussulmans, for they believe no Holy Ghost, and therefore can have no joy in the Holy Ghost.⁷ Not amongst the Jewish Sadducees, for they deny the resurrection,⁸ and

¹ Gen. xxix. 18. ² Heb. xi. 1. ³ Rom. xiv. 17. ⁴ Ecc. iv. 12. ⁵ 2 Sam. i. 20. ⁶ Gen. xxvii. 33. ⁷ Rom. xiv. 17. ⁸ Matt. xxii. 23.

therefore can have no hope of heaven. And where then? Only amongst the Christian believers, for in them only is found this wreath of four, which though singly perhaps they may, yet joined together they can never be broken: that if a philosopher thought it cause enough to cry out in exultation, *ἔρηκα* [I have found it], for finding out the quadrature of a circle in geometry,¹ we much more justly may think it cause enough, in exultation, to cry out *ἔρηκα* for finding out this quadrature of blessedness in Christianity.

The Prophet might well rest now in his similitude as containing sufficiently a godly man's happiness; but he seems to be afraid it is not capacious enough, and therefore pieceth it out with a blessedness of another making: *And whatsoever he doeth, it shall prosper*,—a blessedness much like the manna² in the wilderness, that fits the relish of all tastes; for who but will easily admit prosperity indeed to be a blessedness? and he seems to have provided it specially for the meaner capacities, such as are not well able to apprehend the former, as being too spiritual. But this is a blessedness so visible to be seen, so palpable to be felt, that even the veriest worldling that is cannot choose but acknowledge it; yet we may perceive the Prophet brings it in but as a fag-end of blessedness, as choosing rather to add a coarse piece than that it should be said he had made it too little.

But doth not the Prophet's adding of this piece make the Prophet himself defective? Doth he not, by showing the blessedness to be the more, show his own judgment to be the less? For if this were true, there should not be a godly man to be found in the whole world; for are not all men generally subject to crosses,—some in body, some in goods, some by enemies, some by friends, some in all, but all in some? All this is true; and yet the Prophet nevertheless saith true, for crosses are our sufferings, not our doings. The adversity of a godly man in that he suffers, is no contradiction of prosperity in that he doth; and yet even crosses and sufferings and all, as St. Paul saith, shall be

¹ A problem which involves the (impossible) discovery of a precise numerical ratio between the lengths of the diameter and circumference of the circle. ² Exod. xvi.

made useful and prosperous to the godly;¹ for though martyrs cannot well be said to prosper in their suffering because it is grievous, yet they are truly said to prosper by their suffering because it is glorious; though Lazarus did not prosper in his suffering because it brought him but to Dives' gate, yet he truly prospered by his suffering because it brought him into Abraham's bosom.²

But may not the Prophet preach this doctrine long enough before he meet with an auditory that will believe him? Godliness to be a means of prospering?—a stranger paradox was never held. It is a greater miracle for men to draw prospering out of godliness than for Moses³ to draw water out of rocks. *Probitas laudatur et alget* [goodness is praised, but suffers cold]; godliness may have the world's good word, but he that useth it shall die a beggar. Thus the wicked, through the Prophet's sides, stand goring and galling the goodness of God; and never remember, or never regard, the saying of St. Peter [Paul], that godliness hath the promise both of this life and of the life to come.⁴ But most of all they insult upon the Prophet, as thinking they can take him tripping in his words, and can prove him manifestly in two tales; for that which he saith here of the godly, he affirmeth the very same, in another place, of the wicked: Their ways always prosper;⁵ they are not in trouble like other men;⁶ they have more than their hearts can wish.⁷ And is it possible the Prophet should ever be able to answer this? Can these words of his be ever possibly reconciled? Indeed, with a word, for it is but mistaking a word (taking the present tense for the future) that makes all this difference,—it is but breaking time that makes this discord. Keep time with the Prophet, and all will go well; for he saith not of a godly man, All his ways do prosper, but they shall prosper. He meddles not with the present tense, nor with the prosperity of the present tense; he leaves that for the wicked to make merry

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 17. ² Luke xvi. 20, 22. ³ Numb. xx. 10. ⁴ 1 Tim. iv. 8: "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." ⁵ Ps. xxxvii. 7: "Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way." ⁶ Ps. lxxiii. 5: "They are not in trouble as other men." ⁷ Ps. lxxiii. 7.

with, for it is a prosperity not worth the envying; for who would envy Jonah his gourd, that is gone in a night?¹ The present tense of this life cannot make a prosperity that is worth the having: it is the future tense must do it, for this is the lasting tense; and though it show not all his wares at first, as the present tense doth, you cannot see yet what it will prove; yet give it time, let things come to a ripeness, and you shall find it true in the end, that whatsoever a godly man doeth it shall prosper. And in this tense and in this sense it is that the Prophet speaks of the prosperity of the godly; but if he come to speak of the wicked in this tense, he then alters his key, he speaks in another tune: Thou shalt look after his place, and it shall not be found.²

Or may we not, perhaps, reconcile the Prophet's words as well, if we only say that in speaking of the prosperity of the wicked, *loquitur ut vulgus* [he speaks popularly], and as it is in appearance, because in the eye of the world it seems to be so; but when he speaks of the prosperity of the godly, *loquitur ut veritas* [he speaks as truth itself], because it is in truth and really so. The Prophet, we may perceive, makes this account, that nothing can be truly said to prosper which hath not a prosperous ending; but if it have a prosperous end, it may truly then be said to prosper. And it is a very just account, for else we might say that a cup of cold water prospers in a fever because it cools and easeth for the present, though it infinitely increase the burning afterward. And we could not say that a sovereign medicine prospers in a sore because it aches and pains us for a while, though afterward it work a perfect cure. And now bring the wicked and the godly to the trial of this account, and you shall find it true that the wicked never prosper, and that the godly prosper always. Did Ahab prosper in seeking Naboth's vineyard? He got, indeed, the vineyard, but the dogs licked up his blood.³ Did Judas prosper in betraying his Master? He got, indeed, the thirty pieces of silver, but his bowels would not tarry in his belly after he had done it.⁴

¹ Jonah iv. 6, 7. ² Ps. xxxvii. 10: "Thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be." Also ver. 36: "I sought him, but he could not be found."
³ 1 Kings xxi. 16, 19; xxii. 38. ⁴ Matt. xxvi. 15; Acts i. 18.

And so the most that can be said of the prosperity of the wicked is but this, that they have a prosperity indeed, but it is a tragical one; begins in jollity, and hath some mirth for a while, but ends at last in blood and death. And such, it seems, the Prophet means is the prosperity of the wicked, if he mean not, rather, that a prosperity it seems, but is not; for the wicked may have children, like olive branches, round about their table,¹ and in this may seem to prosper, but yet they do not; and Job tells why: For their children are to the sword, and shall be buried in death.² They may heap up treasure and flow in wealth, and in this may seem to prosper, but yet they do not; and Solomon [David] gives the reason: For they know not who shall gather it.³ Themselves, they are sure, shall carry away nothing. They may rise in honours and be set aloft, and in this may seem to prosper; but yet they do not, and David shows the cause: For they are set in slippery places,⁴ and their ending commonly falls out in falling. And this is not only to be observed in single persons, but even in whole families. A generation or two may flourish, and hold their heads high, and in this may seem to prosper, but yet they do not; for of this is grown a proverb: *Non gaudet tertius hæres*. The third generation pays for all. So it is true here which Abner said to Joab, There is bitterness in the end.⁵ But with the godly is clean otherwise: For many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers them out of all.⁶ So here is prosperity in the ending yet: They may sow in tears, but they shall reap in joy.⁷ Prosperity in the end still: They may go forth weeping, and carrying precious seed with them, but they shall return rejoicing, and bring their sheaves with them.⁸ Still prosperity in the end: Daniel may be cast

¹ Ps. cxxviii. 3: "Thy children like olive-plants round about thy table" (spoken of him "that feareth the Lord"). ² Job xxvii. 14, 15: "If his children be multiplied, it is for the sword. . . . Those that remain of him shall be buried in death."

³ Ps. xxxiii. 6: "He heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them."

⁴ Ps. lxxiii. 18: "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places." ⁵ 2 Sam. ii. 26:

"Shall the sword devour for ever? knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end?" ⁶ Ps. xxxiv. 19: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."

⁷ Ps. cxxvi. 5: "They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy." ⁸ Ps. cxxvii. 7: "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

into the lion's den, but he shall come forth untouched ; his danger shall be his glory.¹ Jonah may be swallowed up of a whale, but he shall be cast up safe on shore ; his destruction shall be his safety.² Job may have his children slain,³ his goods taken from him,⁴ and his body afflicted,⁴ but his children shall be restored,⁵ his goods doubled,⁶ and his life trebled.⁷ And, to make short, the Prophet in another place makes it a rule of infallibility : Mark the upright man, and behold the perfect man, for the end of that man is peace.⁸ And so it is verified here which is said by the Prophet : Sorrow may be overnight, but joy cometh in the morning.⁹ And this, again, is another advantage of the prosperity of the godly, that their sorrow comes but overnight, when they may sleep it out and pass it over ; but their joy cometh in the morning, when they come fresh unto it, and have the whole day before them to enjoy it.

And now, if we ask the Prophet what reason he can give of this prospering of the godly, do not his words themselves answer for him, and carry in them the very reason of it ? For in saying, Whatsoever he doeth, he seems to intend a godly man's service ; and in saying, Shall prosper, he seems to intimate God's wages ; and if this be so, then is the prospering as sure as check ;¹⁰ for as God is a Lord that looks his servants should do their work, so he is a Master that never fails to pay his servants their wages. And then, if blessedness be God's wages, and godliness the man's service, what is this but *ὅτι ἐπεὶ ἔδρα δειξάτω* [what he has to show], the very thing the Prophet takes upon him to demonstrate—A godly man is blessed ?

And here now we may stand and admire the great bounty of God, and consider how good a service it is to serve him, and what great wages he gives his servants ; for the meanness of them all may reckon upon this, that all he doeth shall prosper. The wages are not stinted by the Master,

¹ Dan. vi. 10—28. ² Jonah i. 15, 17. ³ Job i. 13—19. ⁴ Job ii. 7. ⁵ Job xlii. 13. ⁶ Job i. 3 ; cf. xlii. 12. ⁷ Job xlii. 16 : "After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, *even* four generations." ⁸ Ps. xxxvii. 37 : "Mark the perfect *man*, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." ⁹ Ps. xxx. 5 : "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy *cometh* in the morning." ¹⁰ As an audited or checked account.

but by the servant : that if he have not prosperity enough, he may thank himself that would be idle, and do no more ; for all he doeth shall prosper, but nothing but what he doeth ; the Prophet promiseth no further ; for if he do nothing, he must look for no prospering. But what, have good thoughts, then, and good words, no promise of prospering ? If they [be] followed by doing, then are they *prævia actiones* [pioneer deeds], and as part of the doing shall have their reward ; otherwise they are but abortives, and come not to life to give them capacity, for the life of words and thoughts is actuated by the acting. And yet, even thus, the service is so small, the wages so great, that if it were told us by any but by a prophet, or told us of any but of God, we might justly doubt it ; but hearing it from such a reporter, and of such a Master, if we should doubt it now, it might justly be said unto us, What doubt ye of, O ye of little faith ?¹ Yet it must be observed here, though we call it wages, that yet it is not so much earned as given, being more of favour than of merit ; and cannot be exacted, though it may be expected ; for though the wages of sin be death,² yet we cannot properly say the wages of godliness is life. The antithesis hath not place, because our godliness hath not weight ; but eternal life is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And now, if we should ask the world what it says to all this,—whether it think not these blessings to be far more worth than all their gilded vanities,—what do we think would the world answer to such a question ? We may be sure the world would answer thus : It likes the blessings well, and thinks them all good ; but one circumstance in them it doth not like, that they are all in the future, none in the present ; all birds in the bush, none in the hand ; never a bird in the hand amongst them all. “ Blessed are they that mourn, for they (are not, but) shall be comforted.”³ The tree is planted by the waterside, but bears no fruit yet ; but will do. A godly man’s actions (do not prosper, but they) shall prosper. This delay the world doth not like ; it cannot

¹ Matt. xiv. 31. ² Rom. vi. 23 : “ For the wages of sin is death ; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” ³ Matt. v. 4.

away with these future tenses—so much talking of what shall be, and nothing of what is ; and therefore they have a question to ask too, the same which the disciples asked Christ : “ But when shall these things be ? ”¹ for if the blessedness be long a-coming, it can then come but to this, that it may be said, A godly man shall be blessed, but is miserable ; and miserable, too, for God knows how long. Therefore, give us the present, say they, and (as Christ also seems to teach us²) let hereafter shift for itself. This, indeed, is the hinge the world still turns upon ; and it is a hard matter to take it off. But may we not answer these men, as Christ answered his disciples, *Non est vestrum, nōsse tempora*, It is not for you to know the times and seasons, which God hath kept in his own hand ?³ It may suffice you to know that these things shall be ; when they shall be, is more than the portion of your knowledge comes to. It is indeed an earthly question, and moved only by such, of whom it is said, Earth thou art, and to earth thou shalt return ;⁴ for when we move such questions, we return to earth ; for if we stayed with God, we should know that, as the darkness and the light is all alike to him,⁵ so to him the future and the present is all one ; that we may marvel what St. Peter meant to say, A thousand years with God are as a day,⁶ as though there were a proportion between eternity and time ; when Isaiah speaks it out plainly, All nations are to God as nothing,⁷ and put in the balance are less than nothing ; and we may say as well, All time is to him as nothing, and put in the balance with eternity is less than nothing. And therefore, when we meet with these words (will be, and shall be) in relation to God, we may take them rather as words of order than of time, as in order of nature the tree must first be planted before it can bring forth fruit ; a deed must be done before it can be rewarded. And yet even this order also is in God’s disposing, either to divert it, or wholly to

¹ Luke xxi. 7. ² Matt. vi. 25, 31, 34. ³ Acts i. 7 : “ It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.” ⁴ Gen. iii. 19 : “ Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” ⁵ Ps. cxxxix. 12. ⁶ 2 Peter iii. 8 : “ One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” ⁷ Isa. xl. 17 : “ All nations before him are as nothing ; and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity.”

reverse it, at his own pleasure. As in the garden of Eden, there was bearing of fruit as soon as planting of trees, this was a diverting of order; but when God said, Esau have I hated, and loved Jacob,¹ before they had done either good or evil, here was a prospering before a doing, and we may say a bearing of fruit before a planting the tree; and this was an absolute reversing of order. The world therefore must take notice, that Will be, with God, is as much as with men, It is; and when he saith, It shall be, it is as good as if it were already. We all know there is to be *dies retributionis*, a day of account; and this day to be, God knows how soon—sooner, perhaps, than the world thinks, but certainly sooner than the world would have it; and we are sure that this Will be, and Shall be, shall not exceed that day; but how much it shall be sooner (as oftentimes much sooner, and always to the godly, in whose spirits there is an influence of the future in the present, by the presence of that spirit with whom the future is present,) we must leave to God, in whose only hand it is, to dispose of all things, both for time and order.

But lest the godly should be slighted, as men only of expectation, and wholly excluded from any part of blessedness in present, let it be remembered what God's promise to the godly is, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;"² and if never leave us, then always with us; and so indeed doth Christ expound it: And lo, I am with you always to the end of the world.³ And lest his presence should be thought to serve for directing only, and not as well for comforting, hear him in this also: And I will send you another Comforter;⁴ but Christ could not send another comforter, if he were not himself a Comforter first. And may it not then be truly said of the godly, *nullum numen abest* [no divinity is absent]; there is not a person in the whole Deity but is present with them? And can blessedness be absent where the whole Deity is present? And yet more mediately to show God's care over them, he gives his angels charge over them, to keep them in all their ways,⁵

¹ Rom. ix. 13: "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Cf. Mal. i. 2, 3.
² Heb. xiii. 5. ³ Matt. xxviii. 20: "Lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world."
⁴ John xiv. 16: "He shall give you another Comforter." ⁵ Ps. xci. 11.

where the wicked in the meantime, as things forlorn, have neither part nor portion in any of these promises. It was not to the wicked that God said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee; it was not to the wicked that Christ said, And lo, I am with you always to the world's end; it was not to the wicked that Christ promised to send another Comforter; it was not to the wicked that God promised a guard of angels; and may it not then be truly said of the wicked, *nullum numen adest* [no divinity is present]; there is not a person in the whole Deity, there is not an angel in the whole choir of heaven, that is present with them? And what is then the present possession they so much stand upon, and so much boast of? Alas, poor wretches! what is it but as a dream; as Isaiah saith, They dream they are full, and when they awake, behold, their soul is empty.¹ What is it but as a mist upon their souls that makes them, as St. John speaks, to think they are rich, and fair, and strong,² when yet they are poor, and naked, and miserable? For what is their present possession but possession of the present? and what is the present but a transient thing, a thing next to nothing; no sooner begun but ended; that before you can say it is, it is not—the future hath taken its place, and put it from being? And say we allow them to take the whole extent of their present life for the latitude of their present possession, yet what is all this latitude but a breadth made up of narrow minutes, which, being impossible they should be all one like to another, makes it impossible they should make a blessedness that can be certain? Where the blessedness of the godly is more certain than all the assurances of the world can make it. For what are the greatest assurances of all worldly things? Do we not count ourselves sure if we have a good man's word? and here we have the word of God—so sure a word, that heaven and earth shall fail, but his word shall never fail.³ And if his word will not be taken, have we not then

¹ Isa. xxix. 8: "It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty." ² Rev. iii. 17: "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." ³ Matt. xxiv. 35: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

a sufficient man's bond, the bond of the man Jesus Christ, and that in the highest kind of obligation, bound body for body? And if bond be thought too little, have we not then a good pawn besides, *arrham Spiritus Sancti*, a pawn and pledge of the Holy Spirit.¹ And lest there should be defect for want of witnesses, have we not a whole army of martyrs, and confessors innumerable?² that unless the apostles and martyrs should all prove false witnesses, unless the pawn of the Spirit should prove a counterfeit, unless the obligee,³ Christ Jesus, should prove *non solvent* [insolvent], unless God himself should prove no man of his word (all which are far greater impossibilities than that the sky should fall), it is impossible that the hope of the godly should be frustrate, or that these blessings should not be accomplished to them in the fullest measure. And now let the world itself judge if the Prophet had not all the reason of the world to make it his challenge against the world that a godly man is blessed.

But now that the world may seem to be satisfied for the security, now comes in the flesh with her objection: These blessings indeed are sensible to the soul, but insensible to the body; and seeing a man is a compound thing, consisting of a body and a soul, how can these blessings, which reach but only to the soul, make more to be said than this, A godly man is blessed in soul, but is miserable in body; and why, then, should the Prophet shuffle them together, and, as if the body were nobody, say, Blessed is the man? But is it not that, *animus cujusque is est quisque* [the mind of a person is the person himself]? and when the progeny of Jacob went down into Egypt, is it not said that so many souls went down,⁴ without making reckoning of their bodies? and did not Christ say to the thief on the cross, This day thou shalt be with me in paradise,⁵ which yet was meant but only of his soul? And why then should not the Prophet, though but in respect of these blessings, say, Blessed is the man? The body indeed in this life is subject to corruption; and as long as it is so, it is not in itself, nor can be of itself,

¹ 1 Cor. v. 5: "Who hath also given us the earnest of the Spirit."
 "So great a cloud of witnesses." ² Person bound. ³ Exod. i. 5. ⁴ Luke xxiii.
 43: "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

⁵ Heb. xii. 1:
 Luke xxiii.

capable of blessedness ; all the blessedness it hath, or can have, it must have from the participation it hath with the soul, and from the influence it receiveth from the soul, which influence is so strong, which participation so powerful, that it even confounds the distinction of body and soul, and makes them considered but as one entire thing, that even heathen capacities could apprehend how, the body being *in equuleo*, upon the rack, might yet by the strength of this participation be made able to say, *Quàm suave est hoc !* [How delightful is this !] and therefore the Prophet can never be justly blamed for saying (as in this and many other respects he may and must say), A godly man is blessed.

Though this Psalm be most properly understood of a godly man, yet there are some will needs have it primarily to be meant of the man Christ Jesus ; and there may be reasons found to make probable their opinion ; for it is most true indeed of Christ that he prospered in all he did. He prospered in his mother's womb, for at the salutation of the Virgin Mary the babe sprang in the womb of Elizabeth ;¹ he prospered at his birth, for he was presently adored of the wise men of the East ;² he prospered in his infancy, for he grew in favour with God and men ;³ he prospered in his baptism, for there came a voice from heaven, This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.⁴ He prospered in his temptations in the wilderness, for he triumphed over Satan, and the angels ministered unto him ;⁵ he prospered in his death, for he was manifested by miracles to be the Son of God ;⁶ he prospered in the grave, for God suffered not his holy one to see corruption ;⁷ he prospered in his rising, for he ascended into heaven ;⁸ he prospered in ascending, for he sitteth at the right hand of God, in the glory of his Father.⁹ And thus also shall a godly man, as ingrafted into Christ, be carried with him through the like passages : he shall prosper in temptations,

¹ Luke i. 41. ² Matt. ii. 11. ³ Luke ii. 52. ⁴ Matt. iii. 17 : "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." ⁵ Matt. iv. 11. ⁶ Matt. xxvii. 50—54. Cf. Acts ii. 22—24. ⁷ Acts ii. 31. ⁸ Acts i. 9—11. ⁹ Acts vii. 56 : "The Son of man standing on the right hand of God." Also Rom. vi. 4 : "Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father."

for God will give the issue¹ with the temptation; he shall prosper in hunger, for he shall be fed with bread from heaven;² he shall prosper in mourning, for he shall receive comfort;³ he shall prosper in sickness, for God himself will make his bed,⁴ and lay him at ease; he shall prosper in death, for he shall rest from his labours, and his works shall follow him;⁵ he shall prosper in the grave, for he shall sleep in quiet till God awake him, and give him light;⁶ he shall prosper in his resurrection, for he shall meet Christ in the air,⁷ and be carried with him into his kingdom of glory.

And now it may be time, both for the Prophet and us, to rest awhile, and take breath; for of us it may be said that we have now passed over the Mount Gerizim, and are come to the foot of the Mount Ebal;⁸ for we are entering upon his second proposition, which is his *onus*, or burden, for the wicked; and of the Prophet it may be said, that he hath now finished his second prize, and hath put a godly man in quiet possession of his blessedness, and is now entering the lists again, to make good his second challenge—*The wicked are not so* [ver. 4].

Where, first, we may observe that the Prophet observes here a different course in handling of this proposition from that he held in handling the former; for there he only described a godly man, but named him not; here, he only names the wicked, but describes them not; and, indeed, it needed not, for *Rectum est index sui et obliqui* [Justice defines both the just and the unjust]; by telling what a godly man is, he tells, by virtue of the law of contraries, what the wicked are, for if that be affirmed of a wicked man which was denied of a godly, and that denied which was affirmed, the description is made ready to your hand, and you have him deciphered in his fulness. And yet we may take notice of a further reason, for godliness is subject to many falsifications; it may suffer much alloy by mixture

¹ 1 Cor. x. 13. ² Ex. xvi. 4: "I will rain bread from heaven for you."
³ Matt. v. 4. ⁴ Ps. xli. 3. ⁵ Rev. xiv. 13. ⁶ Eph. v. 14: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."
⁷ 1 Thess. iv. 17. ⁸ Josh. viii. 33.

of base metals, and then there is need of a touchstone to try whether it be right or no. Many colours may be laid upon wickedness, to make it seem godliness, as Satan can transform himself into an angel of light ;¹ and then there is need of marks to know whether it be a good angel, whether it be true godliness or no ; but in the case of wickedness, it is not so ; there is no need of any such marks, for there cannot a worse vizard be put upon wickedness than its own face, there is no baser metal to be mingled with it ; and though a wicked man will be counterfeiting to be godly, yet it was never known that a godly man would counterfeit to be wicked ; and therefore the Prophet, who is no waster of words in vain, would not give marks where there needed none, but left wickedness to be known by its own ill face, which is seen plainly enough by the law of contraries.

And now, what means the Prophet by saying, The wicked are not so ? Means he not, They are [not] like a tree ? and what care the wicked whether they be like a tree or no, as long as they may be like to something else, as well to be liked as a tree ? as to be like a flower, or to be like the grass, or like a stone, for they may be so, though they be not so ; they may be like these, though they be not like that ; and any of these will serve their turn, and please them as well, as to be like a tree. This indeed might be their hope, if the Prophet should stay here ; but he quickly takes them off from this hope, for he finds he cannot make use of the law of contraries here as he did before ; though the negation of godliness might well enough express the nature of wickedness, yet the negation of blessedness of the godly is no sufficient expressing of the misery of the wicked ; but as their misery is a positive thing, so it must have a positive expressing ; it is not enough to say, They are not like a tree, but he must tell what they are like ; and he cannot say, They are like a flower, for a flower, when time serves, is the prime beauty of the earth, where wickedness is never but deformity. Nor he cannot say, They are like to grass, for the grass is thought a fit similitude as well for the godly as the wicked, as it is

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 14.

said, All flesh is grass.¹ Nor he cannot say, They are like a stone, for a stone is serviceable for many excellent uses, and especially for building up, where wickedness can serve for nothing but destroying and pulling down; and to what, then, can he say they are like? To speak it at once (as Joab struck Amasa),² and not to speak again, he may justly say, *They are like to chaff*, for chaff as fully expresseth the misery of the wicked, as a tree expressed the blessedness of the godly; for though the likening them to so light a thing as chaff may seem to import but a light misery, yet being well weighed, it will appear that, though he say not in plain terms, A wicked man is miserable; yet by saying he is like to chaff, he intimateth more misery than the word miserable is capable of.

But may we not make a stand here, and question the Prophet about his similitude? for look upon the wicked, do they look like chaff? One would think them rather, in all appearance, to be clean wheat, and the best wheat too, for they only are flourishing—they only carry the price in all markets. But the Prophet speaks not how they look, but what they are; he saith not, They look like chaff, but, They are like chaff; and before he hath done, for all their appearance, he will make it appear they are like chaff, and chaff they are like to have for their similitude. Well, be it so: let the Prophet have his will, and let them be like chaff; what hurt take they by this? for doth not the chaff grow up, and is it not brought up with the wheat? and when harvest comes, are they not both reaped together, and both together laid up into the barn? and what more misery in all this to the chaff than to the wheat itself? All this is true; the Prophet sees it well enough, and therefore stays not here neither; he ends not with saying, They are like to chaff, but, They are like to chaff *which the wind scatters*. For this is that which perfects the similitude; and now let any man except against it if he can; for there was a time, indeed, when the chaff was united to the wheat, and made one body with it, and enjoyed then some privileges for the

¹ Isa. xl. 6.² 2 Sam. xx. 10.

wheat's sake which were proper to the wheat, and nothing at all belonging to the chaff ; and all this while it could not justly be said, The wicked are like to chaff ; but when it is divided from the wheat, and is no longer countenanced by it—when it is not borne out by the greatness of the wheat against the power of the wind, but is wholly cast off, and left alone to itself, then it becomes subject to the scattering of the wind, and then, and not till then, is it made fit to be a similitude for the wicked ; for then it shows itself what it is—the most contemptible and abject thing, the most unquiet and restless thing, that is in the world ; so contemptible and abject, that if it fly in the air all men shut their eyes against it, and if it lie on the ground all men tread their feet upon it ; so unquiet and restless, that even Cain, the man that had the first taste of this similitude, makes this complaint upon it : I am now a vagabond in the earth ;¹ for what is his being a vagabond but his being like chaff ? For who knows not that a vagabond is properly one that roams about from place to place, but is never in his proper place ? and how great a misery it is to be *extra locum proprium*, out of the natural place, may appear by the striving and struggling of all natural bodies to attain it ; but if any such thing be that hath no *locum proprium*, as it were, no home at all to go to, the unquietness of that thing must needs be infinite, seeing it hath not so much as capacity of quietness ; and such a thing is chaff, for the air is not the natural place—it is too heavy for that ; nor the earth is not its natural place—it is too light for that ; and so, as having no home at all to go to, it must of necessity remain a perpetual vagabond still. And such was the state of Cain ; and such is the state of all the wicked, that the Prophet could never have met with such another similitude to express the state of the wicked, as to say, They are like to chaff, which the wind scatters.

But here, by the way, we may let the wicked know they have a thanks to give they little think of ; that they may thank the godly for all the good days they live upon the earth, seeing it is for their sakes, and not for their own, that

¹ Gen. iv. 14 : " I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth."

they enjoy them. For as the chaff, whilst it is united and keeps close to the wheat, enjoys some privileges for the wheat's sake, and is laid up carefully in the barn, but as soon as it is divided and parted from the wheat it is cast out and scattered by the wind, so the wicked, whilst the godly are in company and live amongst them, partake for their sake of some blessings promised to the godly, but if the godly forsake them, or be taken from them, then either a deluge of water comes suddenly upon them, as it did upon the old world when Noah left it and went into the ark,¹ or a deluge of fire, as it did upon Sodom, when Lot left it and went out of the city.² And even one good man is oftentimes enough to moralize the fable of Atlas, and to stay the wrath of heaven from falling down upon the world. For though Abraham in good manners would not press God under the number of ten,³ yet the angel told Lot plainly he could do nothing against Sodom till he were out of it, and far enough from it.⁴

But though we cannot say that a tree and chaff are such contraries as godliness and wickedness are, where denying the one infers affirming the other, and affirming the one denying the other; yet if they be laid together, and well examined, there will be found so infinite odds between them that they may well pass for contraries, which comes so near to being so. For, take but a leaf, which seems, as it were, but the chaff of a tree—at least, the meanest part of it,—and see how infinitely it exceeds this chaff in anything that is of value, as in entity, in use, in goodness. For everything hath so much entity in it, as it hath influence from the *Primum ens* [First Being], and as it is degrees removed from not being; but such⁵ degrees we may conceive, in a leaf, in finite; in chaff or dust, none at all, for it is the very bottom and dregs of all being; and if you would conceive less than dust or chaff, you must conceive just nothing; and in this it resembles sin—at least, comes nearest of anything to resemble it. For sin hath no influence at all from the *Primum ens*; it is no creature of God's making; but when

¹ Gen. vii. 11. ² Gen. xix. 22. ³ Gen. xviii. 32. ⁴ Gen. xix. 22. ⁵ *Pulvis* (Vulg.), dust.

the devil would be counterfeiting God, and take upon him to be a maker, he brought forth sin: other creatures he could make none, and therefore, so much as a man sins, so much he recedes from the *Primum ens*; so much he approacheth to annihilate himself; so much he is made a creature of the devil; and so much he becomes chaff. In matter of use, the odds between a leaf and chaff is yet more evident; for a leaf, besides the service it doth the tree, is serviceable also for food, for medicine, for clothing. A leaf was the first clothing of our first parents,¹ and (as much as we scorn it now) it is our finest clothing still; for what are all our silks but mulberry leaves—at least, by propagation? whereas of chaff or dust there was never any use made since the world was made, but only that by the curse of God it was ordained to be the devil's food.² And in this also it resembles sin; for ever since God said to man, for his sin, Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return,³ the devil hath taken, as common dust, for his common food, so wicked men, as the finest dust, for his *esca delicata*, his daintiest food, as Isaiah calls them.⁴ And this, perhaps, in contracts with witches, makes the devil so eager to be sucking their blood, setting his mark upon them as dainty morsels reserved for his own tooth. Lastly, for goodness, do we not see in the leaf a kind of gratefulness and good-nature, that when it can do the tree no more service by hanging upon it, it then falls off, and lies as near to the root as it can, warming and fattening all the ground about it, as it were, to pay the tree for the juice and nourishment it had received from it; where the chaff is so ungrateful a thing, and of so vile a nature, that wheresoever it lights it makes the very ground barren that receives it; even the ground itself that bore it. And in this also it resembles sin, which, though it be hurtful even to strangers, as appears by the deluge, which brought ruin upon all creatures for the only sin of man, yet it is most hurtful to them that commit it, as it were, to its own parents; and this ungratefulness is so general a symptom to all vice, that it seems to have as large a latitude as vice itself: *Nam*

¹ Gen. iii. 7. ² Gen. iii. 14. ³ Gen. iii. 19. ⁴ Query Jer. li. 34: "He hath swallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his belly with my delicates."

cum ingratum dicis ; omnia vitia dicis [In saying "ungrateful," you name all faults].

Thus the wicked have for their similitude the chaff ; and the chaff hath for its persecutor the wind ; and as the wind, or air, tyrannizeth over the chaff, so the prince that ruleth in the air¹ tyrannizeth over the wicked. This tyrannical wind hath not power over anything so much as over this chaff, for it tumbles and tosses it from post to pillar ; and we may even say it gives the chaff, as it were, a strappado,² for it whirlleth it on high, and then lets it fall at leisure to give it the longer pain. It hath no such power over our tree when it comes to a tree ; it doth it more good than hurt, more pleasure than annoyance ; for when the wind blows, we may justly say the trees are then at their exercise ; for having no local motion in themselves, they are agitated and stirred by the wind, which stirs up their vital vigour as exercise stirs up natural heat in the bodies of men. But the wind hath no such meaning towards the chaff ; it comes not to exercise it, but to vex it ; it makes it not a traveller, but a vagabond ; for if it but happen to light anywhere, the least air that moves removes it again : the east wind drives it forward, the west wind turns it backward, the north wind crosseth them both, that the poor chaff hath no standing, but to stand amazed ; it is held up but by contrary motions ; it is of [on] all hands, under the hand of violence ; it hath no natural rest, but as it is natural to it never to rest ; it must be somewhere, yet it can be nowhere ; it hath a place, but no mansion ; a being, but no abiding ; no refreshing but while the wind is weary ; no resting but till the air be up and ready ; that as long as the air is an element, and hath to do in the world, there is no hope for the miserable chaff to be ever at quiet. And such is the condition of the wicked ; a gale of prosperity hoisteth them up, that they neither know themselves, nor where they are ; a blast of adversity blows them down, and makes them tear the heavens with murmuring, and themselves with impatience. No state, no time, no place contents them ; that it may be truly said, There is

¹ Eph. ii. 2. ² An ancient punishment wherein the victim was drawn to the top of a beam and then let fall, whereby a limb was sometimes dislocated.

no ungodly man that is not a kind of a fool ; their being like chaff makes them lightheaded ; they are only witty to show they have no wit ; only ingenious to do themselves hurt ; their brains, that should rest in their heads, are always a-working to find out heads¹ of unrest ; adversity doth not please them, because they are in a storm ; prosperity doth not please them, because they are becalmed ; a mean degree doth not please them, because it leaves them in the dark ; honour doth not please them, because it sets them in too much light ; labour doth not please them, because it breaks their rest ; ease doth not please them, because it gathers rust ; life doth not please them, because it is always going away ; death doth not please them, because it never suffers them to come again ; that let come what will come, the wicked make sure work to be never contented : where the godly are as a cube ; toss them and tumble them how ye will, yet they have a bottom still to light upon ; and we may truly say, there is no godly man that is not truly wise ; their wits are always employed to find out reasons of contentment ; poverty pleaseth them, because they have nothing to lose ; riches please them, because they have something to give ; adversity pleaseth them, because they may show patience ; prosperity pleaseth them, because they may show charity ; a mean estate pleaseth them, because they may be quiet ; honour pleaseth them, because they may be humble ; labour pleaseth them, because it is a good exercise ; ease pleaseth them, because it is a good recreation ; life pleaseth them, because they have something to do ; death pleaseth them, because they rest from their labours ; that let come what can come, the godly make sure work to be ever contented. Let Fortune appear in what shape she will, yet a godly man is *faber fortunæ suæ* [the maker of his own fortune] ; he can work her and frame her to his own liking, that the Prophet may well justify his similitudes : The godly are like a tree, which stands fixed and immovable ; the wicked are like to chaff, which is scattered about.

It is a miserable thing to be in slavery, much more to be

¹ Occasions or grounds.

in slavery to a tyrant; but to a malicious tyrant, a misery most intolerable. If the Prophet had only said, The wicked are like to chaff which is scattered about, though this had been a slavery, yet there had been hope they might have lighted on a gentle master; but when he saith, They are like the chaff which the wind scatters, this makes them in a desperate case; they are now in slavery to a malicious tyrant, and no possibility of any good for ever. We may observe there are divers kinds of scatterings. It is said of a liberal man that he scatters abroad when he gives to the poor;¹ and it is said of a husbandman that he scatters abroad when he sows his seed;² and these are good scatterings, for they are ways to gathering; though they be scatterings for a time, yet they be gatherings in the end, and such scattering is a blessed thing; but the scattering of the chaff by the wind is not a way to gathering: you may as soon gather the wind in your fist, as gather the chaff when the wind hath once scattered it; it is a scattering first and last, and such scattering is a miserable thing. And we may know the condition of the scattering by the conditions of the scatterer; for alms are scattered by a merciful hand, and seed is scattered by a provident hand, but this chaff is scattered by a malicious hand—the hand of Satan, that will never leave scattering them till he have scattered them for his own gathering, which is the final yet the endless scattering. And therefore it seems well observed in Scripture, that when the godly die it is said, They are gathered to their fathers;³ but when the wicked die, there is no gathering to their fathers spoken of, but their scattering must be understood to be first and last,—a scattering both here and in another world.

And now, if you cannot choose but think it a miserable thing to be this chaff, you can as little choose but think it a miserable thing to be a wicked man; for whatsoever is seen or said of this chaff is true, and more true of a wicked man. The chaff is light, and makes no weight in the balance, but

¹ Prov. xi. 24: "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth." ² Isa. xxviii. 25: "Doth he not . . . scatter the Cummin." ³ Jud. ii. 10: "All that generation were gathered to their fathers."

the wicked are lighter than vanity itself ;¹ they are not worth putting in the balance. The chaff is not moved but when the wind blows, but the wicked are moved when there is no wind at all ; they are afraid where no fear is.² The chaff hath the wind without it that disquiets it, but a wicked man hath the wind within him (his own passions) that disquiet him. The chaff is an absolute abject, and can never rise in value ; but the wicked are more absolute reprobates, and shall never rise in judgment. The chaff is not suffered in the heap of the wheat, but the [wicked³] shall be less suffered *in the congregation of the righteous* [ver. 5]. The chaff is persecuted but by the wind of the air, but the wicked are persecuted by the prince that ruleth in the air ; the chaff is trodden under foot but by men and beasts, but the wicked shall be trampled upon by the devil and his angels.

If that which is spoken of the godly man may be applied to the man Christ Jesus, then certainly that which is spoken of the ungodly may be applied to the wicked Jews ; for no chaff was ever more trodden under foot—no chaff more scattered upon the face of the earth ; that it seems verified of them which David speaks in another place : Let them be as chaff, and let the angel of the Lord persecute them.⁴

The Prophet hath now said fully as much as need to be said in proof of his two positions, A godly man is blessed, a wicked man is miserable ; and why, then, will he use any more words ? Is it, that as a good mathematician, he will not only make a demonstration, but add a corollary ?⁵ or is it, that considering it is the office of a prophet chiefly to tell of things to come, he insists not upon the present misery of the wicked, but, as more properly belonging to his office, he discovers the misery they shall have hereafter ? And, indeed, who but a prophet could have made this discovery ? Or is it that the present misery of the wicked, as a thing more obvious and apparent, he leaves to be gathered from the

¹ Ps. lxi. 9 : "Surely men of low degree *are* vanity, and men of high degree *are* a lie : to be laid in the balance, they *are* altogether *lighter* than vanity." Ps. lii. 5 : "There were they in great fear, *where* no fear was." ² The edition of 1640 erroneously reads, "the *wheat* shall be less suffered," etc. ³ Ps. xxxv. 5 : "Let them be as chaff before the wind : and let the angel of the Lord chase *them*." ⁴ A further theorem the proof of which is deduced directly from the demonstration just gives.

similitude itself ; but their future misery, as a thing less known and more concealed, he will not leave to the venture of others' construction, but for more surety will bring it in himself? And therefore, as the similitude consisted of two parts, They are like to chaff, and to chaff which the wind scatters, so he brings in an inference consisting of two parts, to answer them : They are like to chaff ; therefore they shall not rise¹ in the judgment ; and to chaff which the wind scatters ; therefore they shall not be of the congregation of the righteous.

But is not this a strange inference,—the ungodly are like unto chaff, therefore they shall not rise in the judgment, for being as chaff, they should rise the rather ; for what is apter to rise than that which is light, and what is lighter than the chaff? And yet the inference [is] not so strange as the consequence dangerous, for if the ungodly shall not rise in the judgment, what shall then become of two articles of our faith, the general resurrection and the general judgment? How will the Prophet avoid the imputation of [being] a Sadducee? How will he hold fellowship with St. Paul, who makes a solemn protestation that he believes the resurrection shall be both of just and unjust?² Yet let not this trouble us, for both the inference will be plainly enough justified and the dangerous consequence easily avoided. For take the inference as it is intended—and what can be plainer—the ungodly are like to chaff, therefore they shall not rise in the judgment, for the judgment is as a balance ; but to rise in the judgment is not to rise in the balance, which is a work of lightness, and makes rejected ; but it is a pressing down the balance, which is a rising in value, and makes accepted. And as the inference is thus justified, so the dangerous consequence not only is easily avoided, but the directly contrary consequence necessarily inferred : The ungodly shall not rise in the judgment, therefore there shall be a general resurrection. For the judgment indeed is as a balance to try the weight of things ; but how can the weight of anything

¹ Our author adopts the reading of the Vulgate, *Ideo non RESURGENT impii in iudicio*. [Therefore the wicked shall not rise in the judgment.] ² Acts xxiv. 15 :

"And have hope toward God . . . that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."

be tried if it be not put into the balance, and how can it be put into the balance if it come not where the balance is? When, therefore, the Prophet affirmeth that the ungodly shall not rise *in* the judgment, is it not a necessary consequence that they shall rise *to* the judgment? For how can it be tried whether they shall rise in the judgment or no, if they come not to the judgment where they are to be tried? The general resurrection shall be before the judgment, and therefore this rising in judgment is a rising after the resurrection; and so the not rising here no hindrance to the rising there, but rather enforcing that general, that there may be this particular.

But what say we, then, to that saying of Christ, He that believeth not, is judged already? ¹ for being judged already, he need not come any more to judgment, seeing none shall be judged for one cause twice. We say this is no consequence neither, for what greater unbelievers than those in the Gospel who cast out devils in Christ's name,² yet did not so much as profess Christ's name? And yet even those shall come to judgment, for Christ tells what answer shall be made them when they come there. How, then, is it true that they be judged already? Not by the sentence of the Judge, but by the prejudice of their cause; and this is no hindrance for their coming to judgment. If the Prophet had said, The ungodly shall not rise *to* the judgment, the Sadducees indeed might have taken hold of this, and justly claimed him to be of their side; but when he only saith, They shall not rise *in* the judgment, this is no more than St. Paul would have said himself if he had been in the Prophet's place, for who ever thought the ungodly should rise in the judgment, who are sure to fall in the judgment, seeing their judgment shall be to condemnation, and not to deliverance? To rise *to* the judgment is to be brought to public trial, and this is the general resurrection that we believe; but to rise *in* the judgment is upon trial to come off with credit, and, by the sentence of the Judge, not only to be justified, but advanced. And who ever believed this

¹ John iii. 18: "He that believeth not is condemned already."

² Matt. vii. 22.

rising to belong to the wicked? It is, therefore, well observed by one that St. Paul calls the resurrection of the just *ἐξανάστασιν*,¹ to show that every one who shall have their *ἀνάστασιν*,² to be raised up; but none but the just shall have *ἐξανάστασιν*, to be raised up and be exalted.

And indeed, in this kind of rising, how can any of the ungodly rise who have so many standing ready to pull them down? Cain cannot rise here, and with him no murderer nor malicious person; for if he but offer to come in place, the wounds of Abel fall a-bleeding afresh, and cry out for vengeance. Saul cannot rise here, and, with him, none that trust in the world and distrust in God; for though the witch of Endor could raise up Samuel to Saul,³ yet she cannot here raise up Saul to Samuel. Dives cannot rise here, and with him no glutton nor covetous person, for the blisters of Lazarus are rising upon them, and keep them from rising. Simon Magus cannot rise here, and, with him, none guilty of simony or bribery, for Simon Peter hath stopped all their rising with this, Thou and thy money perish together.⁴ The like may be said of all other ungodly ones, as many as the chaff can challenge to be like it, that it is no hard matter to prove the Prophet's saying true—it is impossible it should be false—The ungodly shall not rise in the judgment.

But may we not draw the similitude, and will not the similitude draw the wicked into a further degree of not rising in judgment than this now spoken of? For cast both wheat and chaff into the ground, and after a few days you shall see the wheat rise flourishing up, and rise up daily more and more, till it come to a fit ripeness to be brought into the barn; but you shall never see more of the chaff than to lie dead in the place, sweltering and mouldering in its own corruption. And this is even intimated in the similitudes themselves, for in the similitude of the godly the Prophet first expresseth passion, and then action: first the

¹ Phil. iii. 11: "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection (*ἐξανάστασις*) of the dead." In all other passages the word resurrection represents the Greek, *anastasis*, except in Matt. xxvii. 53, where the word *egesis* is used of the Lord's rising. ² Acts xxiv. 15. ³ 1 Sam. xxviii. 12—14. ⁴ Acts viii. 20: "Thy money perish with thee."

tree is planted, and then it brings forth fruit ; but in the similitude of the wicked he expresseth nothing but passion : They are like to chaff which the wind scatters ; and seeing the wicked are like to chaff, in which there is nothing but passiveness, how should they rise in the judgment, which is a work of activeness ? But will not this bring us again into a relapse of denying the general resurrection ? Not at all ; for though the chaff cannot rise by any principle of motion it hath in itself, as the tree doth, yet it may be raised up by the working of the wind ; so, though the wicked cannot rise by any seed of life remaining in themselves, as the godly shall, yet they may be raised up by the help of some outward operation. The godly have *semen spiritus* [the seed of the spirit] sown in their hearts by faith ; they are members of Christ's body ; they have this promise made them by Christ, that he will raise them up at the last day ;¹ and therefore their rising shall be a rising to judgment, and a rising in judgment. But the wicked have no such *semen* [seed] in them ; they are no partakers of Christ's body ; they have no such promise made them by Christ, and therefore their rising shall be to judgment, but not in judgment. Their rising shall be by a violent dragging by some other, it shall not be a voluntary motion of their own ; it shall be by infirmity of passiveness, it shall not be by any strength of activeness ; it shall be by the power of Christ's resurrection, it shall not be by participation of Christ's ascension. And so the Prophet's denying the rising of the ungodly in judgment is no negation of their rising to judgment, and therefore neither joins hands with the Sadducees nor shakes hands with our belief, nor yet opposeth St. Paul's protestation.

And as there shall be a general judgment, in which the ungodly shall not rise, so, after the judgment, there shall be a particular congregation of the righteous, in which sinners shall not stand. And, indeed, what society can there be between a tree and chaff ? or who can think it fit that trees and chaff should be made companions ? And as there is no reason that the ungodly, having made others by their

¹ John vi. 39.

counsel to fall here, should rise themselves in judgment hereafter, so there is no reason, seeing the righteous could not be suffered to stand here in the way of sinners, that sinners should be suffered to stand hereafter in the congregation of the righteous. And here now a multitude of reasons seem assembled, as it were, to make it good, that sinners neither can nor ought to stand in this assembly. It is a congregation which none can make but the righteous; for sinners are all rebels, and would make it a rout. It is a court where all must be neat and clean; and so are none but the righteous; for sinners are all lepers, and would make it a spital.¹ It is an assembly of such only as are chosen, and come when they are called; and such are only the righteous; for sinners are all intruders, and scorn to come at any one's call. It is a company that makes a communion, and that can none do but saints, for sinners seek every one their own, and are all for themselves. They must be some hands, some feet, some head, yet all members of one body; and so are only the righteous; for sinners are dismembered members; they would be all head, yet cannot all make a body. They must be all God's friends; at least, such as he knows; and such are only the righteous, for sinners are all mere strangers and aliens from God.

Indeed before the judgment, the wheat and the chaff made both but one heap; but after the judgment, the wheat is received into the barn, and the chaff is cast upon the dunghill, and scattered about. Before the judgment, the ungodly and the righteous made both but one assembly; but after the judgment, the righteous make a city by themselves, which is the new Jerusalem, into which no sinners shall be suffered to enter.² The righteous shall be taken, with the Bridegroom, into glory; and the ungodly with shame shall be shut out of doors.³ For the Judge hath a fan in his hand to winnow the chaff from the wheat,⁴ and to separate the ungodly from the righteous; and this is his fanning, when to the comfort of all comforts he shall say to the godly, *Venite benedicti patris*, Come, ye blessed of my Father;⁵ and to the

¹ Hospital. ² Rev. xxi. 10, 27. ³ Matt. xxv. 10—12. ⁴ Luke iii. 17. ⁵ Matt. xxv. 34.

terror of all terrors, shall say to the wicked, *Ite maledicti in ignem æternum*, Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.¹ And when Christ the Judge hath once said the word, there can be no tarrying; they shall presently be parted; they must presently part; and so be parted, and so part, as never to stand together, never to come together any more for ever.

But seeing the future misery of the wicked shall consist in two main points—in *pæna damni et pæna sensus*, in pain of loss and pain of sense,—why would the Prophet speak here of only their *pæna damni*, as their not rising in judgment, and their not standing in the congregation of the righteous; but speak nothing at all of their *pæna sensus*, when yet to speak of their pain of sense would make us more sensible of their pain, and more readily assent to the Prophet's assertion that wicked men are miserable? Is it that he would not go further than the line of his similitude would lead him, and he saw that his similitude would not reach to *pæna sensus*? For how can chaff, which is a thing without life or sense, be able to express a misery in which there is life only, that there might be sense; and sense only, that there might be pain? Or is it that indeed it needed not, seeing the pain of loss is misery enough to make a hell of itself, and able to bring upon the wicked as much as Christ affirmed, even weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth?² For if ever misery deserved weeping of eyes, if ever loss deserved gnashing of teeth, this is the misery, that they shall not rise in the judgment, by which they shall never come to see the blessed face of God; and this is the loss, that they shall not be of the congregation of the righteous; by which they shall for ever be excluded from all society with saints and angels. Ahasuerus asked Haman what should be done to the man whom the king would honour; and Haman, supposing himself should be the man, made answer, Thus and thus shall be done unto him; but when the king appointed Mordecai to be the man, and himself the man to see it executed,³ oh, what torment, what anguish and vexation did then surprise the soul of

¹ Matt. xxv. 41: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." ² Matt. viii. 12; xiii. 42, 50. ³ Esth. vi. 6—10.

Haman ; to be himself thus basely employed, and the man he most scorned so highly exalted ! Such, and infinitely greater, shall be the torment and anguish of mind to the wicked, when, rising to the judgment, they shall not rise in the judgment ; but they which sat before in the chair of scorers, shall now be scorned themselves ; and, to disgrace them the more, God himself shall turn scorner ; as it is said, God shall laugh them to scorn, and have them in derision.¹

And now let the great men of the world please themselves, and think it a happiness that they can rise in honours, can rise in riches and estimation in the world ; yet, alas ! what is all this, if they fail of rising in the judgment to come ? Let them please themselves, and think it a happiness that they are honoured in all companies where they come, and have the solace of all the good fellowship the world can afford ; yet, alas ! what is all this, if they fail to be admitted into the congregation of the righteous ?

This rising in judgment is that high glory whereof Christ showed a pattern to St. Peter and John, in his transfiguration ;² so high, that they were fain to be carried up into a mountain to see it ; so glorious, that it put them into ecstasies to behold it, and yet but the lower region of this rising neither ; but when St. Paul was taken up into the third heaven,³ where he might see much more than Peter and John could see upon the mountain, he then saw so much glory as made him afflicted to express it, and could not express it but by afflictions. The afflictions of this life are not worthy of the glory that shall be revealed ;⁴ not all the afflictions of the prophets, of whom it is said, They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were slain with the sword ;⁵ not all the afflictions of the martyrs (of whom some were broiled upon gridirons, some roasted upon spits, some broken in pieces upon racks and wheels) put all together, and confined upon one man, yet can never make him worthy of the glory that

¹ Ps. ii. 4 : " He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh : and the Lord shall have them in derision " ² Matt. xvii. 1—6. ³ 2 Cor. xii. 2—4. ⁴ Rom. viii. 18. ⁵ Heb. xii. 37 : " They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword.

is to come. And how then, O my soul, canst thou avoid the ecstasy of Peter and John, but to think of this? how canst thou give David cause to say, Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me?¹ for this rising there will make ample amends for all the fallings that can be here; for though it be a great fall to be laid low in the earth, where the worms shall eat this flesh of thine, yet it will be a greater rising to be raised up into the mount, where thy body shall be made like to Christ's glorious body,² and thou mayest say of thyself now, as St. Paul said, O wretch that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?³ yet when the time of this rising comes, it shall be said of thee, even of thee, O my body, as was said of Mordecai, Thus shall be done to the man whom God will honour.⁴

This congregation of the righteous is that new Jerusalem of which it is said, Great and glorious things are spoken of thee, thou city of God.⁵ Great and glorious indeed, for if we conceive in our minds the happiness of a city where there are millions of millions of citizens, yet all as loving mutually together as David and Jonathan;⁶ where there is holiness immaculate, peace inviolate, joy ineffable, pleasure inexpressible; no time but eternity, no place but immensity, no noise but of music with songs of Hallelujah, no sickness but of love with the spouse in the Canticles,⁷ no motions but of mildness where the Lamb is the leader,⁸ no words but of wonder where the angels are silent,⁹ where God is all in all, and all and every one in God; this congregation is that city; but because no tongue can so well express it as his whose eyes did clearly behold it, hear St. John in his own words: God shall wipe away all tears from all eyes; there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; there shall be no need of the sun nor of the moon, for the glory of God shall

¹ Pa. xlii. 11: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?" ² Phil. iii. 21. ³ Rom. vii. 24: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" ⁴ Esth. vi. 9. ⁵ Ps. lxxxvii. 3: "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God." ⁶ 1 Sam. xviii. 1. ⁷ Song ii. 5. ⁸ Rev. vii. 12: "For the Lamb . . . shall lead them." ⁹ Rev. viii. 1: "There was silence in heaven."

lighten it, and the Lamb shall be the light thereof.¹ Now therefore, O my soul, why art thou cast down, and why art thou so disquieted within me?² What though thou fly as a bird to the mountains,³ what though thou dwell awhile in the tents of Mesech,⁴ this congregation will make amends for all; not only for John Baptist's desolateness in the wilderness, but even for Job's despondency on the dung-hill. We may well be contented to serve a prenticeship here, so we may come to be free of this city hereafter: here we sweep kennels, there shall wear crowns; here we are militant, there shall be triumphant; for Christ the crucified is our captain, and God our glory. And now we may see there was no need at all why the Prophet should aggravate the hell of the damned by adding their sense of pain, seeing no bottom of hell can be so deep as this, to be barred for ever from this rising in judgment, and to be excluded for ever from this congregation of the righteous. And so all this goes on upon the score still to make up the full measures of the blessedness of the godly, and of the misery of the wicked, that no art can show principles so irrefragable, positions so infallible, as these of the Prophet, A godly man is blessed, a wicked man is miserable.

But how happens this sudden alteration in the Prophet? He was so reserved at first, and made so dainty but only to name a righteous man, that he would not do it, though it were to bring him to inherit blessedness; and now, on a sudden, he brings them in by troops, a whole congregation of the righteous at once! Is it not that he durst not presume to use the name of righteous till it were first determined of in the judgment, and till they had their station assigned them amongst the saints? not only because it cannot till then be known whether any such title be due or no (for who knew Judas for any other than a holy apostle till Christ discovered him to be a traitor? or who

¹ Rev. xxi. 4, 23: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain. And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." ² Ps. xlii. 11: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?" ³ Ps. xi. 1: "Flee as a bird to your mountain." ⁴ Ps. cxx. 5: "That I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar."

knew the seven thousand that bowed not their knees to Baal ¹ to be no idolaters, till God, by his own mouth, made them known to Elijah?), but because, indeed, the name of righteous can by no right be given to any till they be tried, and have their approbation in the judgment, to make us know that righteousness stands not so much in merit as in acceptance; and though many may be so qualified by delighting in the law of God as to inherit blessedness, yet till by the judge they be pronounced righteous, they cannot rightly claim the title; and therefore David, who is no herald to decide men's titles, would not use a style that might not be due, and as little would detract from it, being once adjudged.

All the Prophet hath hitherto said seems to be but [*ver. 6*] bare affirmations only, words that we must take upon his word; but now comes in a word of authority, this rational particle, "for," or because—a little word, but of great command, which in all this Psalm hath not been seen till now; and now that it is come, we cannot well tell why it is come; we know it brings a reason with it, but cannot easily find where this reason should lie; for if we take the reason as it seems to lie, the ungodly shall not rise in the judgment, because God knoweth the way of the righteous, is it not as unreasonable a reason as if one should say a malefactor shall be punished because the judge knoweth another to be an honest man? And who would ever look for such a blind reason from a prophet? But is it not that the Prophet hath a good opinion of our understanding, and therefore trusts us to supply that which, by the law of contraries, may plainly, or rather must necessarily, be inferred; for having said, Therefore the ungodly shall not rise in the judgment, nor be of the congregation of the righteous, he leaves us to supply, Therefore the godly shall rise in the judgment, and make a congregation by themselves; and then the reason stands ready to tell wherefore: For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous.

But if this be a reason to make the godly rise in the

¹ 1 Kings xix. 18.

judgment, because God knoweth their way, why is it not, then, as well a reason to make the ungodly to rise in the judgment, seeing we are sure that God knoweth their way as well? And if God's knowing the way of the righteous be a sufficient cause to exclude the wicked, why is not his knowing the way of the wicked as sufficient a cause to exclude the righteous? Here, perhaps, we must be fain to do as astronomers feign to do—make use of certain *phenomena* [appearances]; not that such things be indeed, but that we may conceive them to be, for the better helping of our capacities. As to conceive that there is in God (as to the purpose here) a twofold kind of knowledge, *scientia cognitionis, et scientia dignationis* [a knowledge of perception and a knowledge of approval]; that, common to God with men; this, proper to God alone; that, simple, and without influence or operation; this, operative, and bringing blessings with it. *In scientia cognitionis*, God knows the wicked so well that makes him say, *In scientia dignationis*, he knows them not; but his *scientia dignationis* is as a link that draws with it the whole chain of God's goodness; for whom he knows he regards, whom he regards he preserves, whom he preserves he blesses; and with this kind of knowing God knows none but the righteous, and therefore none but the righteous can have these blessings—to rise in the judgment and to be made a member of the congregation of the righteous. And now the Prophet's reason is found where it lies—the godly shall rise in the judgment, because God knows their way, *In scientia dignationis*; but the ungodly shall not rise in the judgment, nor be of the congregation of the righteous, because, although God knows their way in his *scientia cognitionis*, yet in his *scientia dignationis* he knows it not.

But did not the Prophet give a sufficient reason before why the godly shall rise in the judgment, and make a congregation by themselves, when he said, They are like a tree—seeing a tree hath boughs and branches aspiring towards heaven, united in one root, and making one body? But this, perhaps, as being but a reason drawn from the similitude, the Prophet counts but a similitude of a reason, and takes it but upon a liking; the true reason, and which he

insists upon, is this, which he allegeth here, For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous. For this indeed is the true reason of all the blessings that are or ever shall be to the godly; all their praises that went before, their delighting in the law of God, their exercising themselves in it, and whatsoever else. They are good conditions necessarily required in them that must make this congregation; but the true cause and reason of making it is this which the Prophet brings here,—because the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous. For though it were a good likely reason to say, The godly shall rise in the judgment, and make a congregation by themselves, because they are like a tree; yet it may be asked, What makes them like a tree? Godliness indeed procures them to be made like a tree, but what makes them? For that which makes a thing is a superior cause to that which procures it to be made; and this superior cause the Prophet allegeth here, For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous. And though it were a likely reason to say, The ungodly shall not be of the congregation of the righteous, because they are like to chaff which the wind scatters, yet it may be asked, what makes them like to chaff? Wickedness, indeed, procures them to be made like chaff, but what makes them? Here the Prophet is silent, and says nothing, and by saying nothing seems to acknowledge there is nothing to be said. Wickedness both procures them to be made like chaff, and makes them like chaff; they are both their own ruin and their own ruinousness. God in this kind hath no hand at all in it; it is all their own doing: *Perditio tua ex te, O Israel* [Thy destruction, O Israel, is from thyself].¹

And may not a reason also be conceived thus, why the ungodly can never come to be of the congregation of the righteous, because the ungodly and the righteous go two contrary ways? The righteous go a way that God knows, and the wicked go a way that God destroys; and, seeing these ways can never meet, how should the men meet that go these ways? And to make sure work that they shall

¹ Hos. xiii. 9: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself."

never meet indeed, the Prophet expresseth the way of the righteous by the first link of the chain of God's goodness, which is his knowledge; but expresseth the way of the wicked by the last link of God's justice, which is his destroying. And though God's justice and his mercy do often meet, and are contiguous one to another, yet the first link of his mercy and the last link of his justice can never meet; for it never comes to destroying till God be heard to say, *Nescio vos* [I know you not];¹ and *Nescio vos*, in God, and God's knowledge, can certainly never possibly meet together.

But why doth the Prophet say, The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous; and saith not rather, The Lord knoweth the righteous? why saith he, The way of the ungodly shall perish; and saith not rather, The ungodly shall perish? Is it not that he saith not, The Lord knoweth the righteous, because in another place it is said, There are none such for him to know;² but he knoweth the way of the righteous; and what is this way but he which said, *Ego sum via, veritas, et vita*—I am the way, the truth, and the life?³ And the Prophet might well say that God knoweth this way, seeing Christ saith that none knoweth it but he: None knoweth the Father but the Son, and none knoweth the Son but the Father.⁴ But what is this to us? That if we be engrafted into Christ, who is this way, then God, in knowing this way, knows us that are engrafted in this way; and this way indeed must God know us, or not know us at all; for if he know us not in Christ, in ourselves we are sure he can never know us. Or is it that the Prophet saith not, God knoweth the righteous, but the way of the righteous; perhaps lest men, for doing one or two good deeds in all their life, should claim to be righteous, and for such righteousness claim acquaintance with God; and so indeed God might have acquaintance enough, seeing no man is so wicked but he may sometimes have good thoughts, and do good deeds; but this will not serve; it must be a way of righteousness before God will

¹ Matt. xxv. 12. ² Rom. iii. 10. ³ John xiv. 6. ⁴ Matt. xi. 27: "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son."

know it. Abraham had forsaken his country, and sacrificed his only son with his own hands, in obedience to God, before God came to say of him, *Nunc cognovi te*; ¹ and therefore it is not a turn or two that will serve the turn; it must be an exercising day and night, a continual walking in the law of God, that must make it a way for God to know. Indeed this way is something of a strange condition; for sometimes much and long walking will not make it a way, and sometimes, again, a turn or two will do it. Sometimes the giving of all a man's goods to the poor will do but poor good, ² and sometimes the giving but of a small mite will have no small might in it; ³ sometimes the giving one's body to be burnt will have but cold entertainment, ⁴ and sometimes the giving but a cup of cold water shall be counted a hot service. ⁵ Saul seems to have walked long in a course of godliness, and yet with all he could do, he could not make it a way for God to know, where the thief on the cross, fetched, as I may say, but a turn about; and he made such a way of righteousness, that Christ presently knew it, and took notice of it. It seems the matter is all, with what feet we walk; for if we walk with the feet of the body only (if there be no other goodness in our good deed but only the outward act of doing it), we may walk long enough before we make it a way of righteousness for God to know; but if we walk with the feet of our hearts (in faith and love), then, perhaps, small walking may sometimes serve; for the heart indeed is a hard treader; it leaves prints behind that will not easily be gotten out; and with these feet of the heart, the good thief walked; or else he could never have made a way of righteousness for Christ to know, upon such a sudden as he did. Howsoever, when it is once made a way, whether with much walking or with little, yet God presently knows it; and knowing it, delights in it; and as in the garden of Eden, will walk in it himself; ⁶ then indeed it will be a full measure of blessedness, pressing down, and running over; ⁷

¹ Gen. xxii. 12: "Now I know that thou fearest God." ² 1 Cor. xiii. 3.
³ Mark xii. 42. ⁴ 1 Cor. xiii. 3. ⁵ Matt. x. 42. ⁶ Gen. iii. 8: "They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day." ⁷ Luke vi. 38.

for if in the presence of God there be fulness of joy for evermore,¹ how pressing down, how running over, must that joy be where we enjoy his presence, not only as walking by us, but as walking in us !

And if the Prophet had said the ungodly shall perish, and not the way of the ungodly, it would have made us all afraid ; we could hardly have found eight persons to put into Noah's ark ; for the best that are, have a spice of ungodliness, enough to taint them with the name of ungodly ; but this is the measure of God's mercy, pressing down, and running over, that he will not suffer it to be a way of perishing, unless it be a way of ungodliness first. And here the godly may take this comfort by the way, that it is not their slippings or treading awry, which may be by ignorance, or infirmity, that can make, with God, this shipwreck of perishing ; it must be a way of ungodliness, which is not usually made without much walking and exercising, without resolute intentions and endeavours, without set purposes and persistings, that if a man be sure he is free from these, he may then be confident he is safe from perishing. And though this way of the ungodly and the way of the righteous be very unlike, yet they are like in this, that this way also is not made sometimes with much walking ; and sometimes, again, it is made with a turn or two ; for David walked in adultery and murder a whole year together,² and yet it made not a way of perishing, because he had the tears of repentance to wash away the prints of the steps, and charity to cover them. But Judas walked a turn or two, but for anything we know, and it made a way that made away himself,³ because he neither washed it with repentance, nor covered it with charity. Howsoever the way be made, with much walking or with little, yet if once it come to be a way of ungodliness, there is no way then but perishing ; all the world cannot save him ; he shall never be forgiven in this world, nor in the world to come.⁴ And here again is the measure of God's justice pressing down and running over ; pressing down,

¹ Ps. xvi. 11 : "Thou wilt shew me the path of life : in thy presence is fulness of joy ; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore." ² 2 Sam. xii. xlii.
³ Matt. xxvii. 5. ⁴ Matt. xii. 31, 32.

because it presseth down to the bottom of the bottomless pit ; and running over, because it runs for ever. For then the way of the ungodly is said to perish, when there is no way left to save them from perishing ; for such and so desperate is the state of the ungodly, in the state of ungodliness, that no way is left them either for help or hope. For wherein should they hope for help ? Compassion will not help them, for the Lord will laugh them to scorn in his high displeasure.¹ Mediation will not help them, for God hath sworn, though Noah, Daniel, and Job should speak for them, yet he will not hear them.² Time will not help them, for they shall perish everlastingly.³ Place will not help them, for they shall fall into a bottomless pit.⁴ Death will not help them, for they shall call for death, and it shall flee from them,⁵ that they may live to be tormented with the worm that never dies.⁶ And here now, for very pity's sake, let me put all poor souls in mind that they be careful to remember that warning of Christ, Agree with thine adversary whilst thou art in the way ;⁷ for whilst we are in the way, there are ways left to keep us from perishing. There is a way of compassion, for God delights not in the death of a sinner, but that he should turn from his wickedness and live.⁸ There is a way of mediation, not of the men Daniel and Job, but of the Mediator between God and man, Christ Jesus.⁹ There is a way of repentance, for if a sinner repent him of his sin, God will put away his sin out of his remembrance.¹⁰ But if it once come to this, that the way of the ungodly do perish, alas ! then there is nothing left but woe upon woe ; no way left for help, no way left of hope, nothing to be talked of, nothing to be thought of, but perishing, not only whilst the world endures, but when the world itself shall perish.

¹ Ps. ii. 4, 5 : "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh : the LORD shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure." ² Ezek. xiv. 14 : "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver *but* their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God." ³ Athanasian Creed. ⁴ Ps. cxi. : "Let them be cast into the fire ; into deep pits, that they rise not up again." Cf. Rev. ix., xi., xvii., and xx. ⁵ Job iii. 21 : "Which long for death, but it *cometh* not." ⁶ Ia. lxvi. 24 ; Mark ix. 44, 46, 48. ⁷ Matt. v. 25 : "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him." ⁸ Ezek. xxxiii. 11 : I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked ; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." ⁹ 1 Tim. ii. 3. ¹⁰ Ezek. xviii. 21, 22.

The Prophet gave a good reason before, why there shall be a congregation of the righteous, because God knoweth the way of the righteous; but why would he give no reason here why the way of the ungodly shall perish? For to draw a reason from the law of contraries, as to say, Because God knoweth not the way of the ungodly, will not serve; for God's knowing may well be a strong reason, seeing it is a strong cause—a cause that is operative, and that to many degrees. For whom God knows, he regards; whom he regards, he preserves; whom he preserves, he blesses: but what cause can God's not knowing be? for what operation can be in a negative? Yet so it is: God's not knowing, works by not working; for whom he knows not, he regards not; whom he regards not, he preserves not; and whom he preserves not, they presently fall, and perish of themselves. And the Prophet had great reason to give a reason there, because it was an effect that needed a cause; but he had no reason to give a reason here, because it is an effect without a cause; without a cause efficient, though not deficient; and why then should he give a reason why the ungodly shall perish, seeing, God not knowing them, there can be no reason given why they should not perish?

When it is said, The way of the ungodly shall perish, the wicked take occasion by these words to conceive a hope, as wicked as foolish, that if the way of the ungodly shall perish, then the ungodly shall have no way to stand in; and if they have no place to be in, then they shall be nowhere; and if they be nowhere, then they shall not be at all, which is as much as they desire; for it never troubles them not to be at all, so they may be sure not to be troubled at all. But this is a conceit not only vain but wicked; for by perishing is not meant an utter annihilating and dissolving into nothing; but they are then said to perish when they are forsaken of God and delivered over into the hand of Satan.¹ For when the judgment is once past, and the chaff separated from the wheat, then there shall be a new heaven and a new earth;² but the old hell shall continue still, and

¹ 1 Tim. i. 20.² Rev. xxi. 1; cf. xx. 14.

there the ungodly and their way shall lie ; for in the new earth there shall be no way for either the ungodly to walk in or for sinners to stand in ; but all shall be holy ground, and no feet shall walk or stand there but such only as have put off the shoes of corruption, or rather, indeed, as have put on the shoes of incorruption.¹

The Prophet in the beginning of his Psalm noted in the wicked a triplicity of sinning—walking in the counsel of the ungodly, standing in the way of sinners, and sitting in the chair of scorners ; and here in the end of his Psalm he noteth a triplicity of their punishments : they shall not rise in judgment, they shall not stand in the congregation of the righteous, and their way shall perish ; and it may be thought, when the scorners heard they should not rise in the judgment, this never troubled them, for they are not for rising ; they are well enough as they are ; they have a chair to sit in, and they scorn to rise. And when the sinners heard they should not stand in the congregation of the righteous, this did not much move them neither ; for they like better to be by themselves, in the way of sinners, than be bound to keep company with such precise fellows ; but when the ungodly hear that their way shall perish, and that they shall not have that way to walk in, this strikes them dead ; their hearts are clean done ; and now would they be begging of Abraham to send Lazarus to their father's house,² to warn their friends from following their courses, for fear of their curses.

And may it not now be truly said that the Prophet hath performed both his prizes to the full ? for as before he did not leave a godly man till he had brought him to receive his portion in heaven, so now he hath not left a wicked man till he hath brought him to receive his portion in hell. For the wicked have a portion too, though they were better be without it ; a miserable portion, to have misery for a portion ; yet so the Prophet in another place calls it. This is their portion : fire and brimstone, and a stormy tempest.³ And now we may indeed say the Prophet hath well ended his task, and

¹ 2 Pet. iii. 13. ² Luke xvi. 27, 28. ³ Ps. xi. 6: "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest : *this shall be* the portion of their cup."

we might say happily, but that he ends it miserably ; for he hath delivered his Psalm, as it were, in a tragical form, making it to begin with blessedness and to end with perishing ; but yet he hath so framed it that we may easily reduce it, by help of the law of contraries, into a more comical form (if I may so speak), making it to begin with misery and to end with blessedness ; and this, perhaps, will be a form more capable of a *plaudite*¹ from our hands, and of an *Io pœan*² from our tongues, and may thus be framed : Miserable and wretched are the men that have walked in the counsel of the ungodly, and have stood in the way of sinners, and have sat in the chair of scorers ; but have no delight in the law of the Lord, nor in his law will exercise themselves, either day or night ; and they shall be like to chaff which the wind scatters. The godly are not so ; but they are like a tree planted by the water's side, which will give its fruit in its time ; the leaves also shall not wither, and whatsoever they do it shall prosper. Therefore the godly shall rise in the judgment, and (parted from the wicked) shall make a congregation by themselves. For the Lord knoweth not the way of the wicked, and the way of the godly shall be established.

¹ A demand for applause.

² A shout of triumphant praise.

WINS

WINS

DAVID,
n-

Knight.

glesfield,
Pauls

*Recensui Meditationes has in Septem
Psalms Davidis, & Typis
mandari permitto.*

SAMUEL BAKER.

Ex Aedibus Londinens :
Iunii 5, 1638.¹

¹ I have revised these Meditations on Seven Psalms of David, and allow them to be printed.

SAMUEL BAKER.

At my house in London, June 5th, 1638.

To the
RIGHT HONOURABLE
MARY, COUNTESS OF DORSET,
THE VIRTUOUS LADY OF THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EDWARD,
EARL OF DORSET.

MOST HONOURED LADY,—It is not the least of your virtues, that you are not proud of your virtues ; which if it had been in the angels that fell, they had perhaps not fallen. And because you delight so much in humbleness, it makes me bold to present unto you these Psalms of David's humiliation. How happy were I, if I could make a *descant*,¹ answerable to David's plain-song :¹ but what is wanting in mine, your own meditations will happily supply ; which cannot but be excellent, being followed by the practice of so virtuous a life ; of which I wish I could as well make a monument to remain to all posterity for their example, as it will certainly remain to your own posterity for their glory. But lest I should add the offence of tediousness to boldness, I humbly crave pardon for having said so much, but more, for having said no more ; and make it my aspiring suit to be accounted, as I truly am,

Your Ladyship's devoted servant,
RICHARD BAKER.

¹ *Plain-song*, the air ; *descant*, the harmonious accompaniment.

O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. 2. Have mercy upon me, O LORD ; for I *am* weak : O LORD, heal me ; for my bones are vexed. 3. My soul is also sore vexed : but thou, O LORD, how long ? 4. Return, O LORD, deliver my soul : oh save me for thy mercies' sake. 5. For in death *there is* no remembrance of thee : in the grave who shall give thee thanks ? 6. I am weary with my groaning ; all the night make I my bed to swim ; I water my couch with my tears. 7. Mine eye is consumed because of grief ; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies. 8. Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity ; for the LORD hath heard the voice of my weeping. 9. The LORD hath heard my supplication ; the LORD will receive my prayer. 10. Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed : let them return *and* be ashamed suddenly.—PSALM vi. (Auth. Vers.)

MEDITATIONS AND DISQUISITIONS

UPON

THE SIXTH PSALM.

O MY soul, what is it thou hast done? Hast thou been striving with the angel about the body of Moses? For why else shouldst thou be afraid of the angel's imprecation to Satan, when he strove with him about it, "The Lord rebuke thee"?¹ Certainly either the angel was very mild in his imprecation, or thou art very sharp in thy deprecation. But oh, wretch that I am! if Satan deserved rebuking for striving with an angel, how much more do I deserve it for striving with the Creator² of angels, and not about taking away the body of Moses, but about taking away the glory of his holy name? For such and so execrable are my sins, that through them the holiness of God's glorious name is blasphemed among the Gentiles;³ and have I not just cause, then, to fear that he will, and therefore just cause to pray that he will *not rebuke me in his anger, nor chasten me in his heavy⁴ displeasure.*

But though rebuking were an imprecation to Satan, yet to me it is not so, seeing I do not more deserve it than I need it. As I deserve it for my sin, so I need it for my amendment, for without rebuking what amending?—what amending, indeed, without thy rebuking? for, alas! the flesh flatters me, the world abuseth me, Satan deludes me; and now, O God, if thou also shouldst hold thy peace,⁵ and wink at

¹ Jude 9. ² Isa. xlv. 9. ³ Isa. lii. 5. ⁴ "Hot" (A.V.) ⁵ Ps. lxxxiii. 1

my follies, whom should I have—alas ! whom could I have—to make me sensible of their foulness ? If thou shouldst not tell me, and tell me roundly, I went astray, how should I ever—alas ! how could I ever—be brought to return into the right way ? To thy rebuking, therefore, I humbly submit myself. I know thou intendest it for my amendment, and not for my confusion ; for my conversion, and not for my subversion. It may be bitter in the tasting, but is most comfortable in the working ; hard, perhaps, to digest, but most sovereign being digested. Yet I cannot endure thou shouldst rebuke me in anger ; I cannot endure it in affection, but I can less endure it in ability. It is grievous to me to think thou art angry, but it is insupportable to me to feel thou art angry. The hand of thine anger is heavy ; and though of thyself thou be, as it were, a sweetly breathing air, yet anger makes thee a consuming fire ;¹ that if thine anger be kindled, yea, but a little,² Blessed are all they that put their trust in thee.

When I consider with myself the many favours—undeserved favours—thou hast vouchsafed unto me, and consider withal how little use, how ill use, I have made of them all, though I know I have justly deserved thy rebuking, yet my hope is still thou wilt add this favour also, not to rebuke me in thine anger. But when I think how unkind a thing thy rebuking is, but how terrible a thing thine anger is ; when I think what a pain it is to have thee chasten me, but what a death it is to have thee chasten me in displeasure, then I fall a-trembling in all my joints, and never think I can make haste enough to say, and to say with sighing, O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy heavy displeasure.

But why may not God rebuke me, as Eli rebuked his sons ? For he rebuked his sons for their sins, and yet no anger appeared in him at all.³ O my soul, wilt thou make Eli a pattern for God ? Because God is a loving Father, wilt thou, therefore, make him, like Eli, too indulgent a

¹ Deut. iv. 24. ² Ps. ii. 12 : " Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." ³ 1 Sam. ii. 23—25.

Father? Eli, indeed, rebuked his sons with a rod, but he made his rod of roses and violets; he rebuked them for sins of presumption as if they had been but sins of infirmity; he rebuked them for sins of wilfulness as if they had been but sins of ignorance. And what was this but instead of striking them to stroke them, and instead of stopping them in their race to add rather a spur unto them? And was it not for this that God rebuked Eli in his anger, because Eli rebuked not his sons in his anger?¹ I deny not, O God, but that my sins deserve thine anger; or, rather, I acknowledge they justly provoke thine anger; but alas, O Lord, if thou shouldst enter into judgment with thy servants,² what flesh were able to stand before thee and not be consumed?³ O vile sin of mine, enough to put patience itself into choler, able to anger a saint, nay, even the King of saints,—that if thou, O God, shouldst rebuke me in thine anger, if chasten me in thy heavy displeasure, I could not say but that thine anger were lenity and thy displeasure mildness.

But what boldness of language is this in speaking to God? Am I not worthy of rebuke for praying God not to rebuke me in his anger, as though I thought that God could be angry? For is not anger a passion of human infirmity, and will I make God subject to passions of infirmity? Is not anger a defect in reason? Is not God a perfection above reason? and can there be defect in perfection? Can there be passion in him that is *purus actus* [a pure act]? But is it not that anger in God is not a passion, but an action; not a defect, but an effect? for then is God said to be angry when he puts his judgments in execution, when his rebukings tend not to conversion but to confusion, when his mercy attempers not the rigour of his justice. Oh, then, rebuke me, O God, but not in thine anger; rebuke me as thou didst the Ninevites, who at thy rebuking repented and were converted;⁴ but rebuke me not as thou didst Pharaoh, who hardened his heart⁵ at thy rebuking, and was confounded. If thou, O God, shouldst rebuke me in thine anger, I should more have an eye to thy rod than give an

¹ 1 Sam. iii. 13.² Ps. cxliii. 2³ Cf. Nah. i. 6.⁴ Jonah iii. 4—10.⁵ Ex. viii. 15, *et alibi*.

ear to thy lesson; I should be more terrified with thine anger than edified with thy rebuking, and should be made incapable of thy doctrine with the terror of thy teaching; for I, alas, am as a nail under the workman's hammer, better driven in with gentle strokes than with hard blows. Oh, therefore, rebuke me not, O God, if thou be angry; or, if thou rebuke me, be not angry. Two such sharp notes as anger and rebuking are, can never make any pleasing music if they meet together. Anger in rebuking makes the water troubled and thick, that should be drunk clear; makes the air sultry and hot, that should be breathed in cold—extremely (both of them) unwholesome for the body; and seeing thou intendest my health, and seekest not to make me sick, let not anger inflame thy rebuking, O God, that so the air of it I may take in the cooler, that so the water of it I may drink the clearer. I, alas, am as a narrow-mouthed vessel in the hand of the drawer, better filled with softly pouring in than with pouring in hastily, which commonly spills more than it fills; and seeing thy rebuking is too precious a liquor to be spilt, oh pour it in with the softly hand of patience, and not with the hasty hand of anger, that so it may the sooner fill and the better enter without spilling into this narrow-mouthed vessel of my empty soul. Thy rebuking, O God, is to me as thunder, but thine anger is as lightning; and is it not enough that thou terrify my soul with the thunder of thy rebuking, but thou wilt also set this flax of my flesh on fire with the lightning of thine anger?¹ Thy rebuking of itself is a precious balm, but mixed with anger turns to a corrosive. O keep thy corrosives, O God, for such hardened hearts as Pharaoh's was; apply to me only the simple balm of thy rebuking, and let it not have any mixture at all of thy corroding anger in it. What though I have offended thee with sins of anger, must thou needs take revenge in the same kind thou art offended? And if needs thou must do so, why mayst thou not, then, take revenge of my sins in thy good pleasure, seeing I have offended thee as much with sins of pleasure? Thou didst

¹ Isa. i. 31.

walk in Paradise with our first parents in the cool of the day,¹ when the heat of the sun was over, and this made thy presence as cheerful as glorious. Vouchsafe, O God, to deal so with me ; rebuke me in the cool of thy Spirit, when the heat of thine anger is overpast, for else, alas, it may be glorious, but can never be comfortable.²

But if rebuking me in thine anger be so bitter a potion, what is it then to chasten me in thine indignation ? for where the worst of thy rebuking in anger is but threatening of punishment, the best of thy chastening in indignation is inflicting of punishment ; and though a strong heart may perhaps endure such threatenings, yet no strength of heart is able to bear such inflictions. It is terror enough to hear thee but chide ; but to feel thee strike, and that with strokes of indignation, what power of any creature is able to endure it ? I ask not, thou wouldst not chasten me ; this were to ask, thou wouldst not love me ; for whom thou lovest thou chastenest ;³ and would I lose thy love for any chastening ? O gracious God, chasten me in what manner, with what measure thou pleasest ; chasten me as thou didst Lazarus, by making him die for hunger at Dives' gate ;⁴ chasten me as thou didst Job, by making him lie with sores upon the dunghill ;⁵ chasten me as thou didst Daniel, by making him be cast into the lions' den ;⁶ but then chasten me in love, and not in indignation ; for thy chastening in love, though it pain, yet it heals ; though it bruise, yet it comforts ; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me ;⁷ but thy chastening in indignation is pain without hope, is bruising in despair, or, rather, not a pain, but a torment ; not a bruising, but a breaking ; that no misery can be comparable to this chastening, to be chastened in thine indignation.

Chastening and love may well be matched together ; they are like to Jacob and Rachel ; though there be seven years of service more, yet Rachel will be had at last ;⁸ but chastening and indignation are as badly matched as may be, for chastening inclines to conversion, and indignation is wholly bent upon confusion. Oh, therefore, match thy chastening

¹ Gen. iii. 8. ² Strengthening. ³ Heb. xii. 6. ⁴ Luke xvi. 20—22. ⁵ Job ii. 7, 8. ⁶ Dan. vi. 16. ⁷ Ps. xxiii. 4. ⁸ Gen. xxix. 27, 28.

with love, and not with indignation, that so at least I may come at last to enjoy my Rachel,—that is, thy favour. Chastening and love may lodge both together in the bowels¹ of a father, but indignation comes not where bowels are; and how then, O God, canst thou chasten me in indignation, but thou must as it were disembowel thyself and utterly abandon the name of a Father? and shall anything make thee to leave that name? I know, O God, it is a name so dear unto thee that I hope I shall commit no such sin; and suffer me not, O God, to commit any such sin as shall ever be able to make thee abandon it. Indeed here, where we call thee Lord, indignation may appear, and be bold to show itself; but when we come to name thee Father, indignation must be gone, and never presume to come in place. If thy chastening be intended for reforming or for polishing, what wouldst thou do with indignation, that tends to abolish-ing? And if thou chasten whom thou lovest, and then destroy whom thou chastenest, what difference will there be between thy indignation and thy mercy? Oh, let not thy chastening, which is ordained to be a rod for thy children, be made a knife to slaughter thy children. Consider, O God, I am but a pot made of brittle clay,² that if thy hand hold not a temper in striking I shall soon be broken and beaten in pieces, and then thy workmanship will be defaced. And shall it ever be said of thee that with one hand thou makest and with the other hand destroyest? Remember, O God, whose title it is to be a destroyer;³ thy title is to be a Creator; and shall I find no more favour at the hands of a Creator⁴ than I might look to find at the hands of a destroyer?

Alas, my soul! I know full well it were a grievous case for me if God should let his chastening and his indignation join together and assail me with them both at once, but how shall I do to keep them asunder? Have I any Moses to stand for me in the gap?⁵ Blessed be thy glorious name,

¹ Affection. ² Isa. xlv. 9. ³ Rev. ix. 11: "The angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon" (or Destroyer). ⁴ 1 Pet. iv. 19: "Let them . . . commit their souls to him . . . as to a faithful Creator." ⁵ Num. xvi. 48.

O God! I have indeed a greater than Moses, even him whom thou didst chasten in thy heavy displeasure; to the end thou mightst not chasten me in thy heavy displeasure; for his agony of crying My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?¹ gives me boldness to cry, and confidence in crying, My God, my God, have mercy upon me. This I know will help when all other helps fail. But what have I in myself to plead why God should not chasten me in his heavy displeasure? Can I say I have not deserved it? or can I say I have not even provoked him to do it? Alas, O God, I have nothing in thee to fly to, but only thy mercy; nothing in myself to plead,² but only my weakness. *Have mercy upon me, O God,³ for I am weak* [ver. 2].

But is this not a weak plea, to allege weakness for a plea? weak indeed with men who commonly tread hardest upon the weakest, and are ever going over where the hedge is lowest; but no weak plea with God, whose mercy is ever ready upon all occasions, and then most when there is most need; and seeing there is greatest need where there is greatest weakness, therefore no plea with God so strong as this, *Have mercy upon me, O God, for I am weak.*

But why should David pray for mercy to help his weakness? for what can mercy do? Mercy can but pity his weakness; it is strength that must relieve it. But is it not that mercy, I may say, is as the steward of God's house, and hath the command of all he hath; that if wisdom be wanting for direction, mercy can procure it; if justice be wanting for defence, mercy can obtain it; if strength be wanting for support, mercy can command it; and therefore no plea so perfect to be urged with God as this, *Have mercy upon me O God, for I am weak.*

But why should David make his weakness a motive to God for mercy? for is not weakness an effect of sin? and can God love the effect when he hates the cause? But it is not the weakness in David that God loves, but the acknowledging of his weakness; for what is this but the true humility? and who knows not in how high account such humility is

¹ Matt. xxvii. 46.² Rom. vii. 18.³ "LORD" (A.V.)

with God, seeing it is indeed of this wonderful condition, that though nothing be so low, yet nothing reacheth so high, and therefore no motive so fit to move God as this: Have mercy upon me, O God, for I am weak. Mercy, indeed, looks down upon no object so directly as upon weakness, and weakness looks up to no object so directly as to mercy; and therefore they cannot choose but meet, and, meeting, not choose but embrace each other: mercy, weakness as her client; weakness, mercy as her patron; that no plea can be with God so strong as this, Have mercy upon me, O God, for I am weak. Let thy indignation, O God, be laid upon Pharaoh, and such as trust in their strength, for upon them thou mayst get thee honour;¹ but, alas, what honour can be gotten by pouring thy indignation upon so weak a creature as I am? Thy honour shall be as much to support my weakness by thy mercy as to abate their pride by thine indignation.

But what though David be weak, is every weakness sufficient cause to run to God about? Might he not take restoratives and cordials, and such other comfortable things, and so help his weakness without going to God? O my soul, what comfort is in a cordial, if it be not of God's making? What strength in a restorative, if it be not of God's giving? No, O Lord, thy mercy is the only restorative that can help my weakness, the true *aqua celestis* [water of heaven] to comfort my spirits.

I know, O God, thou sweetly disposest all things both in weight and measure; thou considerest man that he is but dust;² thou knowest me, that I am a worm, and no man;³ and can it then be thou shouldst have no consideration of my weakness? Wilt thou not proportion thy burden to the bearer? Wilt thou load a gnat as thou wouldst load a camel? Oh, have mercy upon me, O God, and consider my weakness, for I am weak.

But why should David make his weakness a cause for God to spare him? For how came he by his weakness? Was it not by his own disorder? And then, if his weakness be

¹ Exod. xiv. 18.² Ps. ciii. 14.³ Ps. xxii. 6.

one of his faults, hath not God just cause to strike him the harder for his weakness? It seems, indeed, that David cannot deny but that he deserves it, and therefore lays not his plea in the court of God's justicé, but of his mercy; for his mercy, he knoweth, hath bowels of compassion,¹ and will not always be ruled by rigour; but, finding contrition, will have a regard of weakness. And, indeed, seeing the end of God's chastening is but to piece up my breaches, why should he strike so hard to break me in pieces.

But are there not some men that feign themselves to be poor when yet they be rich, because they would pay but a little tribute? And may not David be such a one, feign himself to be weak when perhaps he was strong, because he would have God to spare him in his chastening? But never have such a thought of David, for hear him what he says farther: Heal me, *for my bones are troubled*;² and surely, if his bones be troubled, he may well be allowed to say he is weak. For if there be any strength in our bodies, it is in our bones: they are both ablest to withstand harm, and farthest removed out of harm's way; that before any trouble can come to them, it must pass the skin, the flesh, the membranes, and all other parts; that if once the bones come to be troubled, we may justly say, *Res rediit ad triarios* [there has arisen a need for the reserves], the matter is come to the height of extremity. And, therefore, David finding trouble in his bones, had just cause to complain of weakness, and to say, Heal me, O God, for my bones are troubled. Distempers and infirmities are ever more hard or easy to be cured, as they are seated in parts more hard or easy to be wrought upon; and therefore distempers in the spirits are of all other the easiest to be cured, more hard in the humours, but in the solid parts hardest of all, for then they grow to be hectic;³ and such, in all account, are scarce held curable; and seeing of all the solid parts the bones are the most solid, and therefore diseases in them the hardest to be cured, David had just cause to call to God for help, and to say, Heal me, O God, for my bones are troubled.

¹ 1 John iii. 17.² "Vexed" (A.V.)³ Fevered.

If the beams of a house be unsound and shaken, how is it possible the house should stand? and as little is it possible that this body of mine should be saved from ruin, if my bones which are the beams of it be out of order and troubled.

But if the trouble of the bones be so incurable, is it not presumption in David to say, Heal me, O God, for my bones are troubled; being, as if he should say, Cure me, O God, for I am past all cure; and so tempt God with desiring him to do a work that is impossible? But is it not that David knows to whom he speaks? He knows he speaks not to Galen or to Hippocrates:¹ he knows he speaks not to Æsculapius or to Apollo;² but he speaks to him that is a transcendent to all these: one to whom not only nothing is impossible, but to whom all impossible things are nothing. It were indeed an unreasonable request in the eye of nature, but very reasonable in the eye of faith, seeing faith indeed is then most reasonable when most it is above all reason, which therefore made Abraham the father of the faithful,³ because, contrary to hope, he believed in hope that God would make him such a father. And, indeed, most properly then it grows to be a cure for God, when in man's judgment it is grown incurable, as Christ would not go to heal Lazarus until he was dead,⁴ and had been four days buried,⁵ thereby perhaps to prepare belief for his own resurrection, seeing it might well be believed he could rise himself the third day, who had raised another after four days. Never therefore fear, my soul, to say with David, Heal me, for my bones are troubled; for the time will come when he shall heal thee, not only when thy bones be troubled, but when they be mouldered away into dust and powder; for even then he will gather them together again, and make them stand up, and serve for beams to this body of thine, as now they do.

But how can the bones be troubled, seeing they have no sense? for it is the flesh and the membranes that feel the pain; the bones feel none. Oh, then, consider how great

¹ Celebrated ancient physicians, who taught the healing art to men. xi. 14. ² John xi. 17.

³ Apollo, god of medicine, father of Æsculapius, Gal. iii. 9: "Faithful Abraham." ⁴ John

my trouble is, which strikes a sense of pain into my very parts that are not sensible.

And now it would be comfort indeed to have my bones healed, if when they were healed I might then be at quiet ; but, alas, what comfort is it now to be healed of their trouble when God's chastening hand pursues me still, and lays more and greater troubles upon me continually ? For though the trouble of the bones be the height of trouble, yet it is but the trouble of the body ; my soul all this while hath been at quiet, but now *my soul itself is troubled also*¹ [ver. 3], and so extremely troubled that I feel it, and feel it sensibly, in all the parts of my soul ; I feel it in my memory when I remember the grievous sins which I have committed ; I feel it in my understanding when I consider thy glorious majesty, whom I have offended ; I feel it in my will when I think upon the terror of thy displeasure which I have incurred. If the trouble were but in this or that part only, I might yet find comfort in the other ; but now that every part of my soul, now that all my whole soul is troubled, and extremely troubled, alas, now I may truly say, Was ever sorrow like my sorrow, was ever trouble like this of mine ?

But can the soul be troubled ? Is it not a spiritual substance ? And are not all earthly things too gross to trouble that which is a spirit ? They should be so indeed, and they would be so indeed, if the soul had her right. But, alas, while we live here the soul is but an inmate to the body, and therefore the body crows over it as being upon its own dunghill, and makes us all of kin to Martha, troubled about many things² when but one is needful. And yet these be not of the things that trouble the noble soul, not the soul of David. In matters, indeed, between the world and us, the soul is forced to look down upon the earth as upon that which sustains it ; and if it find a want there, it finds withal a trouble indeed ; but a trouble to the body only ; or if to the soul, but in the body's behalf, which is not much. That which properly troubles the soul is the proper trouble of the soul, and is only in matters between God and us ; and in matters

¹ " My soul is also sore vexed " (A.V.)

² Luke x. 40, 41.

of this nature it looks up to heaven, for there indeed is the soul's freehold; and if that inheritance be once questioned, then the soul finds itself in trouble presently, and so extremely troubled, that where the trouble of the body is but the body of trouble, this trouble of the soul is, I may say, the soul of trouble. And is not this inheritance questioned if God fall once to rebuke me in his anger? for seeing the inheritance is but a mere gift proceeding from his favour,¹ how can I expect it if I be in his displeasure? When I was in my greatest weakness, yet my bones afforded me at least some strength; and when my bones were troubled, yet my soul was able to take care of their curing; but now that my soul itself is troubled, alas, O God, who is there but thyself only of whom I can hope for any comfort? And therefore, *O Lord, how long?* How long wilt thou let me lie languishing in my weakness? How long wilt thou suffer me to struggle with oppression? How long wilt thou see the extremity of my misery, and not relieve me? Thou, indeed, inhabitest eternity,² and no time to thee is either short or long;³ but I, alas, am a subject of times, and nothing so much tyrannizeth over me as this tyrant time, and specially when it joins with misery; for then, as a thousand years are with thee but as a day,⁴ so a day with me is as a thousand years; measure me not therefore by thy standard of eternity, but measure me by the standard of time. And then, O Lord, how long? How long shall thy chastening hand lie heavy upon me?⁵ How long wilt thou pour upon me the vials of thine indignation?⁶ How long shall my soul be kept from her true inheritance, which is to bear a part in the comfort of angels? My soul is a free spirit, and is with nothing so much delighted as with liberty; with nothing so much vexed as with thralldom; and in thralldom, alas, in miserable thralldom is my soul detained; and therefore, O Lord, how long? How long shall my soul be restrained of her liberty? How long shall I lie groaning in the dungeon of captivity? How long shall no date be set to give a period to my thralldom? My

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 16: "Our Father, which . . . hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace." ² Isa. lvii. 15. ³ Ps. xc. 4. ⁴ 2 Pet. iii. 8. ⁵ Ps. xxxii. 4. ⁶ Rev. xvi. 1; xxi. 9.

soul, I may say, is all heart, and therefore every trouble it feels must needs go to the heart; yet none so deep as this, that I am forced to cry to thee out of the deep,¹ and cannot yet ascend out of this vale of misery;² and therefore, O Lord, how long? How long shall I live in the death of this fear, the fear of death? How long shall I desire to be dissolved,³ that being reunited again I may never more be dissolved? How long shall my immortal soul be kept from the possession of her immortality, from the immortality of her possession? If the saints in heaven, who now tread time under their feet, do yet continue this question still, to ask how long,—How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt thou not avenge our blood on them that live in the earth?⁴—is it marvel that I who live under the tyranny of time should begin this question, to ask how long? How long, O Lord, merciful and just, wilt thou not avenge me on the world and Satan for the wrongs they have done me? How long shall I be kept from saying, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”⁵ How long shall the angel with the flaming sword keep me from entering again into Paradise?⁶ Where is the morning of joy I promised to myself when I said, Sorrow may be in the evening, but joy cometh in the morning?⁷ For how many evenings, how many tedious nights of sorrow have I endured, and yet can see no morning of joy, no dawning of morning toward?⁸ Where is the truth of that aphorism, *Dolor si gravis brevis* [sorrow when grievous is short], for what dolor so grievous as this of my soul, and yet, O Lord, how long? How long shall I stand complaining, and say my soul is troubled? Is it not that I shall never cease to say my soul is troubled, till he return again who once said for me that his soul was troubled?⁹ For, alas, his soul should never have been troubled, but to take away, amongst others, the trouble of mine, seeing he is

¹ Ps. cxxx. 1. ² Probably referring to the valley of Achor (*trouble*): see Jos. vii. 24, and Hos. ii. 15. ³ Phil. i. 23: “Having a desire to depart” (*Desiderium habens dissolvi. — Vulgate*). ⁴ Rev. vi. 10: “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” ⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 55. ⁶ Gen. iii. 24: “And he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.” ⁷ Ps. xxx. 5: “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” ⁸ Ap-
proaching. ⁹ John xii. 27.

the sacrifice for all our sins,¹ and "with his stripes we are healed."² And now, therefore, O Lord, how long? How long wilt thou turn away thy face³ and not show me again the light of thy countenance?⁴ How long wilt thou absent thyself from me, and not afford me the joy of thy presence? How long wilt thou be going still farther from me, and not so much as once offer to return? *Oh, return at last, and deliver my soul, save me for thy mercy's sake* [ver. 4]; for alas, O Lord, all my troubles are come upon me because thou wentest from me; all my grievance is long of thine absence, for as long as thou wert with me, and that I had thy presence, my soul was at quiet, my bones were at rest, and I enjoyed then a sweet and pleasing calm over all my parts; but as soon as thou departest from me, and didst but turn away thy face, my calm was presently turned into a tempest, a violent tempest of thunder and lightning—thunder of thy rebuking, and lightning of thine anger; that if thou stay not thy hand from chastening, and return the sooner, I shall never be able to hold out living, to taste of thy mercy. St. Peter was never so near drowning when he cried out to Christ, Lord, save me, or else I perish,⁵ as David is now near sinking in the pit of perdition, if God return not speedily and deliver his soul. But what speak I of David, as though it were not my own case? And if my danger be as great, shall not my prayer be as earnest? or can I find a better way of saving than thy returning? No, O Lord; for if thou return, I am sure thou wilt not, I know thou canst not, leave thy mercy behind; and mercy, when it comes, I know it cannot, I am sure it will not, ever suffer it to be perdition; for though my soul were at the pit's brink, and ready to fall in, yet even then would mercy put forth her hand and save me.

Thou requirest me to return to thee; and alas, O Lord, how can I, if thou return not to me first? Can I come to thee unless thou draw me?⁶ and canst thou draw me to thee if thou withdraw thyself from me? I know thou returnest

¹ Ps. liii. 10: "Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin."

² Isa. liii. 5.

³ Ps. lxxxix. 46: "How long, LORD? wilt thou hide thyself for ever?"

⁴ Ps. iv. 6.

⁵ Matt. xiv. 30.

⁶ John vi. 44.

continually to dispose and order the economy of thy creatures; but this returning is in thy providence, and is not that which I desire. I know thou returnest often to visit and judge the sins of the world, as thou didst at Sodom;¹ but this returning is in thy justice, and therefore neither is this returning for my turn. But thou hast a returning in grace and favour, when thou returnest to me to make me return to thee—a returning from thine anger to thy patience, from thine indignation to thy lovingkindness; and this is the returning which I so earnestly desire and sue for.

But, O my soul, before God return in this manner to thee, thou must look to hear him expostulate with thee in this manner: Alas, my creature, what hast thou done to bring these troubles upon thyself? Did I not make thee at first a sound body, and did I not give it a strong constitution? and how happens it now that thy bones should be troubled? Did I not breathe into it a perfect soul, and gave it endowments after mine own image? and how comes it now to be so quite out of order, and so clean bereft of all my graces? Thou wilt perhaps answer, It is true, O Lord, my bones are troubled; and how can they choose, seeing thou tookest one of them away from me² which thou gavest me at first? My soul also is troubled; and how can it choose, seeing thou didst suffer the serpent in Paradise to disturb and trouble it?³ But may not God then justly reply, I took one of thy bones from thee indeed, but it was to make thee a helper. I let in the serpent into Paradise indeed, but it was to try thee for thy better perfecting; and when I saw thee so foolishly hurt thyself with thy helper, and so easily won from me by a tempter, had I not just cause to leave thee to them for whom thou ledest me? And now, forlorn wretch, what hast thou to say, unless thou have leave to say, Return, O Lord, and deliver my soul; save me for thy mercy's sake?

But what more necessity is there of God's returning to deliver his soul than there was before to heal his bones? and in that case he spake not a word of returning, and why

¹ Gen. xviii. 21. ² Gen. ii. 18, 21. ³ Gen. iii.

should he more importune it now? Is it not that many diseases may be well enough cured only by relation of symptoms, though the physician come not where the patient is? and of this sort it seems was the healing of his bones. But to deliver his soul is of another nature, and requires perhaps a feeling the pulse, perhaps an inspection of the patient; and therefore no remedy here but the physician must himself be present.

But is it enough to make suit to God, in general terms, to pray him to deliver my soul, and not tell him from what it is he must deliver it? Can any man think that God will return upon so uncertain an occasion? Alas, O Lord, it is not unknown to thee that my soul wants no clothes, and therefore it is not to deliver it from nakedness; my soul needs no meat, and therefore it is not to deliver it from hunger; my soul is never old, and therefore it is not to deliver it from the racks of time. But it is, indeed, to deliver it from trouble; and what it is that can trouble my soul thou knowest, for my soul is thy servant, depending wholly upon thy favour, and, having offended thee, desires to be delivered from all fear of thine anger. My soul was at first a free spirit, but is now become a bond-slave to sin, and therefore desires to be delivered from this bondage. My soul is itself immortal, but is troubled here with a mortal body, and therefore desires to be delivered from this body of death;¹ and in effect it is all but sin, and the train that sin draws after it, from which I desire my soul should be delivered. And, therefore, return, O Lord, and deliver my soul; save me for thy mercy's sake.

But, O my soul, with what reason canst thou expect that God should ever return to thee; for who would be willing to come to one in trouble, as thou art, lest he pay for his coming with drawing a trouble upon himself? And if he should return and come unto thee, wouldst thou be so satisfied? wouldst thou not presently be importuning him for further favours? He must help thee in thy troubles, he must help thee out of thy troubles, or thou wouldst

¹ Rom. vii. 24.

never be at quiet. And is it a small matter to deliver a soul out of trouble? Do souls used to be troubled for trifles? and were he not better then to endure thy importunity for his returning, than, being returned, to be troubled with importunity for thy deliverance? But, O my soul, be not frightened with these vain objections; for is God like man, that he should be afraid of being troubled? Is he not the God of mercy; and can it be a trouble to his mercy to do the works of mercy? Is it not his delight to be, is it not his title to be called, is it not his glory to be counted a deliverer?¹ And is any deliverance so fit for his mercy, so worthy of his mercy, as deliverance of souls? Alas, O Lord, it is a small work for thee to return, but thou shalt do an infinite work by thy returning; for thou shalt deliver my soul out of trouble, my grieved soul out of grievous troubles. And wilt thou not afford me so much kindness to do so small a matter for effecting of so great a matter? Oh return, O God, and deliver my soul, that, as thou art called a deliverer, so I may call thee my deliverer, and may sing with Moses, Thou, O God, art my strength and my song, for thou hast been my deliverance.²

But why should this be made so great a matter? For though in saying, Return, O Lord, and deliver my soul, I seem to require of God two several works, one to return and another to deliver me, yet they are in truth but both as one; at least, no more differing than the cause and the effect, seeing his very returning is itself a deliverance. The only turning his face towards me makes me to see the light of his countenance;³ and no sooner doth that light shine upon my soul, but all the clouds that darkened it are presently dispelled; all the troubles that vexed my bones are instantly healed. But though deliverance be an effect of God's returning, yet it must be when he returns in a good mood, and not in a rebuking or in a chastening disposition; for if his anger continue still, were it not better for me he

¹ 2 Sam. xxii. 2; Ps. xviii. 2, xl. 17, lxx. 5, cxliv. 2, etc. ² Exod. xv. 2: "The LORD is my strength and song, he is become my salvation." ³ Ps. lxxix. 16, 17: "Turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies. And hide not thy face from thy servant."

should tarry away? and why, then, am I so importunate with him to return, before I know in what terms I stand with him, and whether he be angry still or no? But it is even for this that I importune his returning, that I may be assured his anger is past; for as long as he is angry, he never comes where I am; to do that were a greater favour than his anger can afford; but as soon as his anger is a little over, he is apt of himself to return unto me; for his delight is with the children of men,¹ and specially with those that call upon him; and when he returns, his anger being over, he useth to do as the dove did, that, when the waters were a little abated, returned into the ark and brought the olive branch with her in her mouth;² so God returning, when the waters of his displeasure are a little abated, brings the olive branch of peace and deliverance along with him.

But say, my soul, that God should return and should deliver thee, wouldst thou then be quiet, and not trouble him with any more suits? should this be the last request thou wouldst make? Alas, no! I have one suit more to make; and thou, O God, that gavest Abraham leave to importune thee with one suit after another,³ vouchsafe me this favour, to make this suit also, and this indeed shall be the last I will ever make: Save me for thy mercy's sake. For as thy returning would be to small purpose if thou didst not deliver me, so thy deliverance will be to small purpose if thou do not also save me. To deliver me, and then leave me to be seized upon again, would make thee but *Auctor imperfecti operis*—leave thy work imperfect, which cannot agree with the perfection of thy most perfect workmanship. And now, O God, if thou take pleasure in conjunctions, be pleased to take pleasure in this conjunction—not to join thy rebuking and thy anger together, not to join thy chastening and thy indignation together, but to join thy deliverance and salvation together; for those conjunctions separate us from thee, this conjunction unites us to thee; those bring us to shipwreck, this brings us into the haven; deliverance avoids the rocks, salvation sets safe on shore. And is not this that which David means when in another place he saith,

¹ Ps. viii. 31.² Gen. viii. 11.³ Gen. xviii. 23—32.

With thee, O God, there is plenteous redemption? ¹ It is redemption, indeed, if thou but only deliver my soul; but it is not plenteous redemption unless, besides delivering, thou also save me. O then be pleased in thy plenteous redemption to grant me this conjunction of deliverance and salvation, that I may return thee the conjunction of praise and thanksgiving, and may sing and say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, yet thine anger is turned away. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid. ²

But how can God return to deliver me and to save me if he return not a deliverer and a Saviour? and when will this be? O my soul, in how much better state art thou than David was! for he only expected when it should be, but thou art assured when it was. For then was God manifested to return a deliverer and a Saviour, when the angel brought this tidings to the shepherds: This day is born to you a Saviour, ³ of whom also a voice from heaven testified, This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. ⁴ Oh, then, return to me in this Saviour in whom thou art well pleased, that so I shall be sure, for so I shall be sure thou wilt not chasten me in thy displeasure.

As there have been many particular deluges and floods, yet but one general, so there have been many particular deliverers and saviours, yet but one general; and from this general Saviour it is that I desire and expect salvation; for though his being a general Saviour may make him be thought less careful of me, having so many others to care for besides, yet have no fear of that, my soul, seeing he is as much a Saviour to me as if he were a Saviour to none but me; and this general Saviour will save me generally, not only from temporal but from spiritual enemies; not only from trouble of bones, but from trouble of soul; not only from miseries here on earth, but even from miseries when earth itself shall be no more. O happy salvation, when this Saviour shall come and save me! but how may I do to get him to come? for he comes not but upon some motive. If I had all the gold of Ophir, I would willingly give it all to get him to come and save me; but, alas! I neither have it to give, nor

¹ Ps. cxxx. 7. ² Isa. xii. 1, 2. ³ Luke ii. 11. ⁴ Matt. iii. 17.

doth he care to have it: if anything win him to do it, it must be *for his mercy's sake*, and for his mercy's sake he will do it, if ever he will do it.

But is not this strange? My weakness was the motive before to move God to mercy; and must his mercy now be itself the motive to move him to save me? yet so it is; for when God's mercy finds no motive from us, rather than fail of moving, it becomes a motive to itself; and happy it is for us that so it is, for else we might often be without it when most we need it; or, rather, always be without it, seeing we always need it. Indeed, this motive, for his mercy's sake, is the *primum mobile* [first mover] of all motives to God for showing his favour. He had never delivered the Israelites out of Egypt but for his mercy's sake; he had never saved Noah in the ark but for his mercy's sake; but, above all, he had never sent his Son to save the world but for his mercy's sake. And how then can I doubt, and not rather be confident, that for his mercy's sake he will also deliver my soul and save me? Never, therefore, my soul, look after any further motives; for upon this motive will I set up my rest. His mercy shall be both my anchor and my harbour; it shall be both my armour and my fortress; it shall be both my ransom and my garland; it shall be both my deliverance and my salvation.

And now, O God, thou seest the manifold troubles I am in; thou seest how weak I am; thou seest how my bones are troubled; thou seest how my soul is troubled; and what now can thy chastening hand have more of me but only to take away my life? and even my life I would willingly make a sacrifice to appease thy displeasure. But, alas! O Lord, what good can it be to thee to have me die? Can I praise thee in the dust? but can I praise thee when I am turned to dust? *Is there remembrance of thee in death? or is there hallowing of thy name in the grave?*¹ [ver. 5.] As long as I have breath in my body I can praise thy name; unworthily, indeed, but yet I can praise it. As long as I am numbered among the living I can show myself thy servant; an unpro-

¹ Ps. vi. 5: "For in death *there is* no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" (Auth. Ver.)

fitable one indeed, but yet a servant ; but if my soul and body be dissolved once, alas ! then all my service of praising thee is at an end. I cannot then do it, though I would ; but I cannot then will it, though I should ; my soul will want her instruments with which thy praises should be sounded. O vile death, I hate thee for nothing so much as for thy hindering me in this service ! O cruel grave, I abhor thee so much for nothing as for thy stopping my mouth for this praising ! O merciful God, if I could but remember thee in death, I would never be loath to die. If I could but praise thee in the grave, I would willingly go to it of myself, and never be carried to it by force ; but, alas, death is forgetful, the grave is dumb ; and therefore deliver my soul, O God, save me for thy mercy's sake.

It is not life that is so dear unto me, but that in life I may praise thee that art so dear unto me. It is not death that is so frightful to me, but this affrights me in death, that being dead I cannot remember thee. It is not the grave that is so loathsome to me, but that in the grave I am forced to forget thee. If death will spare me but to praise thee, let death come and never spare me. If the grave will but let me be sensible of thee, the grave shall come and be welcome to me ; but, alas, death hath no mercy, the grave hath no sense ; and therefore return, O Lord, and deliver my soul, save me for thy mercy's sake.

Who knows not that death is a mortal enemy to all natural memory, and therefore makes all men at last to end in a lethargy ; and what hope then of remembering thee in death ? Who knows not that the grave never opens its mouth to let out anything, but still to take in ; and what means then of praising thee in the grave ? If I could but get death to learn the art of memory, or if I could but hear the grave to say once it had enough,¹ I could then like to have some dealing with death, some traffic with the grave ; but, alas, death's lethargy is incurable, the grave's mouth is insatiable ; and therefore return, O Lord, and deliver my soul, save me for thy mercy's sake.

¹ PROV. xxx. 15, 16.

But doth David's prayer tend to this, that he may not see death? Is this the intent of his request that he may not descend into the pit? Doth he pray to be as Enoch¹ or Elijah,² taken from the earth without returning into earth? Alas, he knows this to be either altogether impossible or altogether unlikely, and therefore no likely request to be made by so wise a man. This therefore is certainly the intent of his prayer, that God will not so chasten him in his indignation as to leave him in the hands of death; but that as death receives him from life and delivers him to the grave, so the grave, receiving him from death, may deliver him again to life, that as Christ commanded his apostles to shake off the dust from their feet when they came into any unworthy house, and to come away,³ so he, coming into this unworthy house of death, the dungeon of the grave, may be able to shake off the dust from his feet, and by the power of him that said, Lazarus, come forth!⁴ have his soul and body reunited again; and so united be admitted into the choir of saints and angels, eternally to sing the eternal Hallelujah. For as the departing of the soul from the body is the death of the body, so the dividing of the body from the soul is a kind of death to the soul; that it is not as it would be, nor fully enjoys itself until it can meet with the body, and be united to it again. For though it find the body here but a base cottage, or rather a loathsome prison, yet it shall find it there a glorious palace, or rather a holy temple consecrated to God; and therefore, until this be had, it will not fully be accomplished that is here prayed for: Return, O God, and deliver my soul, save me for thy mercy's sake.

The remembrance of this, that I cannot remember thee in death, makes me forgetful of myself in life; and because I cannot praise thee, nor pray to thee, in the grave, it makes me to sigh and weep to thee in my bed, and what I want in continuance to supply with violence. For *I am weary with my sighing*;⁵ *all the night make I my bed to swim, I water my couch with my tears* [ver. 6]. Oh, let my remembering thee

¹ Heb. xi. 5. ² 2 Kings ii. 11. ³ Matt. x. 14. ⁴ John xi. 43. ⁵ "I am weary with my groaning." (Auth. Ver.)

in life supply the place of my forgetting thee in death ; and when I lie in my grave senseless and silent, be pleased to remember how I have lain in my bed sighing and weeping. My sins, as being disordinate passions,¹ make me undergo a passive penance, and this hath been my weakness, my trouble of bones, and my trouble of soul ; but being also disordinate actions, they make me liable also to do active penance ; and what is this but my fighting and my weeping ? And though I cannot act sorrow so well as sin, yet my bed and my couch can be witnesses of my sorrow as well as of my sin. Mine eyes indeed chiefly have done the penance, because mine eyes first began the offence.² If mine eyes had not set me first on fire, mine eyes had not shed such showers of tears ; but now how could burning be quenched but with water ? how burning rising from mine eyes, but with water falling from mine eyes ? But yet why should my bed suffer, for my bed had no hand in the fault of mine eyes ? But, alas, how could my bed but prove a *deadand*,³ which so apparently,⁴ I may say, did *movere ad mortem* [move to (cause) death] ? Though my bed were not principal in the act, yet my bed was accessory to the fact, as receiving unlawful and stolen pleasures.

But though my sins indeed be my greatest enemies, yet there are personal enemies that have their malignity also, which though I cannot say they trouble me as ill, yet I may truly say they trouble me as well as these ; for *mine eye is consumed because of grief, and is waxen old because of all mine enemies* [ver. 7]. You may say, perhaps, that my sighs were feigned, and that my tears were counterfeit ; but the consumption of mine eye is a witness of my sorrow, without exception, that if my passive penance before were not cause sufficient, at least my active penance now gives me just cause to say, Was ever sorrow like my sorrow ?⁵ Was ever grief like this of mine ? And all this penance I suffer and do because of

¹ Disorderly emotions. ² 2 Sam. xi. 2. ³ In Exod. xxi. 28—32, it was enacted that an ox, that killed a man or woman, should be stoned. By an extension of this principle it was at one time usual in this country that the instrument of a homicide, whether malicious or accidental, should be confiscated under the name *Deadand* (forfeit to God). ⁴ Evidently. ⁵ Lam. i. 12.

mine enemies, for how could I choose but sigh and weep, to see the vile, the execrable dealing of mine enemies that persecute me in their hearts,¹ and yet speak peace with their mouths;² that lay snares to entrap me,³ and yet bear me in hand it shall be for my good; that prejudice my cause as if it would never succeed, and prejudicate my prayers as if they would never be heard?⁴

But what means David by this? Will not his weeping make his enemies rejoice the more? will not the seeing him thus dejected make them the more insulting over him? will they not be ready to say, Is this he that encountered a lion and a bear?⁵ he that entered combat with a giant, the terror of a whole army?⁶ and now to fall a-crying, one cannot tell for what? But David is a better husband of his tears than to spend them idly; he knows for what he spends them—because of his enemies, indeed, but not for fear of his enemies. They are neither tears of fear,—for whom should he fear that hath God on his side? nor tears of vain-glory,—for why then should he shed them in the night, when none can see them? nor tears of joy,—for how then should they make him look old, which is an effect of grief? but they are tears of supplication and tears of compassion. First of supplication, that God will either convert them or confound them; and, not converting, then tears of compassion, to think of their confusion. For such is the tenderness of a godly eye, that it hath tears to shed even for enemies. And when these two waters, the tears of supplication and the tears of compassion, meet together, what marvel if they make a flood in David's bed, seeing the concourse of like waters⁷ made the great deluge in the whole world? for what are his tears of supplication but as the waters that rose from the springs of the earth, and what are his tears of compassion but as the waters that fell from the cataracts of heaven? Or is it not perhaps that David makes his enemies here a figure

¹ Ps. cxl. 2: "Which imagine mischiefs in *their* heart." ² Ps. xxviii. 3: "Which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief *is* in their hearts." ³ Ps. xxxviii. 12. ⁴ Ps. iii. 2: "Many *there be* which say of my soul, *There is* no help for him in God." ⁵ 1 Sam. xvii. 34, 35. ⁶ 1 Sam. xvii. 23, 24, 45. ⁷ Gen. vii. 11: "The same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened."

of his sins, which are indeed his greatest enemies? as also that he makes his own passion a figure of Christ's compassion, which was indeed one of his passions? for then he wept over Jerusalem in compassion of their confusion,¹ when with tears of supplication he could not prevail with them in compassing their conversion. When they would not hear him how often he would have gathered them together as a hen gathereth her chickens,² with tears of supplication; then they hear him say, There shall not be a stone left upon another which shall not be cast down,³ with tears of compassion.

I grieve not so much that mine eye is waxen old, though it be waxen old with grief, as I grieve to see that my enemies have no eyes at all,—at least, no eyes but of malice, who rejoice at my afflictions, and make themselves as merry with my weeping eyes as the Philistines made themselves with Samson's blinded eyes.⁴ I grieve to see their destruction draw near, and they laugh at my grieving, and at the oldness and alteration which grief hath brought upon me. And was it not so with my Saviour Christ, which made the Jews say, Thou art not yet fifty years old,⁵ as though he looked like one near fifty, when he was indeed not much above thirty.

But seeing with all my sighing and grieving I cannot reclaim them, I here disclaim them: *Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity*; [ver. 8] away from me, all ye that are wolves in sheep's clothing.⁶ I put not away poor penitent sinners, that do penance for their sins as I have done, and may rather be said to suffer sin than to do it, as being more of infirmity than of will; I put away them that make iniquity their work, and think it a penance when they be not committing of sin,—them that are journeymen to the trade, or rather masters in the mystery,⁷ them that vilify my sighs and say they are but suitors *in formâ pauperis* [in the character of a needy person], and therefore that God scorns them that reproach my tears, and say they are but dumb solicitors, and therefore God cannot hear them. But see how much

¹ Luke xix. 41, 42. ² Luke xiii. 34. ³ Luke xix. 44. ⁴ Jud. xvi. 23—25.
⁵ John viii. 57. ⁶ Matt. vii. 15. ⁷ Craft or profession.

they are deceived ; for now, contrary to their hopes, and more to their wishes, *the Lord hath heard the voice of my tears* ; hath heard it, and therefore does not scorn it ; the voice of my tears, and therefore my tears are not dumb ; and where all other voices may be doubted, whether God will hear them or no, the voice of tears hath God's care, I may say, at command ; at least, is never denied access unto his hearing. And this is but my first and lowest degree of comfort, for a higher than this, *He hath heard my request*.¹ [ver. 9.] But what ! hath God no masters of requests about him, but is master of requests himself ? Indeed, when he would know the sins of Sodom,² he took not information from the angels, but came down himself to see ; and should he in person see sins, and not in person hear prayers ? And to show himself to be his own master of requests indeed, he hath taken my petition into his hands, that I cannot now doubt of having my request granted, seeing the Prince that must grant it is himself the master of requests to present it ; and what is it to receive a supplication into his hands but to receive the suppliant into his favour ?

If he only heard the voice of my tears, I might doubt lest he thought them but like the tears of Esau,³ and so should slight them ; or if he only heard my request, I might fear lest he thought it but like the request of the mother of Zebedee's sons, and so reject it ;⁴ but now that he hath taken my supplication into his hands, now I may be sure he means to do something in it, seeing he never takes anything in hand which he brings not to a happy and successful period, against all opposition. The voice of my tears brought God to cast his eye upon me ;⁵ my request brought him to bow his ear unto me ; but the taking my supplication into his hand hath brought him to compassionate my estate ; and seeing his compassion is active, and his pity relieving, my tears of sorrow may now be turned into tears of joy,⁶ my lamentations into songs of thanksgiving. The lamentable

¹ "The LORD hath heard my supplication : the LORD will receive my prayer." (Auth. Ver.) ² Gen. xviii. 20, 21. ³ Heb. xii. 17 : "He found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." ⁴ Matt. xx. 20-23. ⁵ Ps. lxxxvi. 1 : "Bow down thine ear, O LORD, hear me ; for I am poor and needy." ⁶ Jer. xxxi. 13 : "I will turn their mourning into joy."

accent of my language made God first to look upon me ; the pitiful nature of my suit made him next to listen to me ; but the justness of my cause in hand made him lastly to take my petition into his hand, which is in effect to grant it out of hand.

Indeed, God is with no music so much delighted as with that of voices ; with no voices so much as with those of tears ; with no tears so much as with those of the heart, and such were mine, though sent forth by the eyes. And now whose eyes would not be moved at so strange a sight, to hear eyes speak ? whose ears would not be moved at so strange a hearing, to see tears be a suitor ? whose hands would refuse so strange a writing, where eyes, I may say, are the pen, tears the ink, and sighs the paper ? Pardon my curiosity, O God, in imagining wonders, while I meditate of thee in whom are nothing but wonders.

And what remains now but that my sorrows remove their lodging, and sojourn with my enemies, as they have done with me ? [ver. 10.]¹ What remains but that my sighs be turned upon mine enemies' breasts, my tears upon their eyes, and that the pit they digged for me they may fall into themselves,² and that with the violence of falling suddenly ? As for me, I shall live to see mine enemies turn their backs and be ashamed ;³ I shall live to see them hide their faces, and be confounded ; but before all, and above all, I shall live to magnify thy glorious name, O God,⁴ who art blessed for ever.

But is David's charity come to this, to be turned into cursings and imprecations ? Indeed, no otherwise than God to the serpent, when he said, Cursed art thou above all cattle ;⁵ for when men are grown into that reprobate sense that they are more like to limbs of Satan than to creatures after the image of God, then it is lawful in God's cause to take God's course, and to turn them over to shame and confusion.

¹ Ps. vi. 10 : " Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed : let them return and be ashamed suddenly." * Ps. lxxvi. 6 : " They have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they have fallen themselves." * Ps. xxxv. 4 : " Let them be turned back and brought to confusion that desire my hurt." * Ps. cxviii. 17 : " I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD." * Gen. iii. 14.

Blessed *is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.*
2. Blessed *is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.* 3. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. 4. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me : my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. 5. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD ; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah. 6. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found : surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. 7. Thou *art* my hiding place ; thou shalt preserve me from trouble ; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah. 8. I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go : I will guide thee with mine eye. 9. Be ye not as the horse, *or* as the mule, *which* have no understanding : whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee. 10. Many sorrows *shall be* to the wicked : but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about. 11. Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous : and shout for joy, all *ye that are* upright in heart.—PSALM xxxii. (Auth. Ver.)

MEDITATIONS AND DISQUISITIONS

UPON

THE THIRTY-SECOND PSALM.

BLESSEDNESS was cried in the first Psalm,¹ but was there held so dear, that few or none have ever been able to go to the price. Now in this Psalm it is cried again, and at a low rate; and if it be not taken now, it is not like hereafter to be ever had so cheap again; for where before it must have cost an absolute declining from sin, and a perfect delighting in the law of God, with a continual exercising in it day and night,² now, if we can but get our iniquities to be remitted, and our sins to be covered, it will serve the turn, and be accepted.³

But is this so much an easier rate? For though the purchasing of blessedness were before a great work to be done, yet it was a work that might be done by ourselves, where the purchasing it this way must be the work of another; and were it not better to have it by a way in our own power than by a way in another's will? But, O my soul, is it in man to direct his own way?⁴ Is it in man's power to perform the work that is required? Hath he not long since put out the light that should have guided him in it? hath he not long ago cut off the lock⁵ that should have been his strength to perform it? Oh, therefore, blessed be he that affords us blessedness at this rate; for though it be in another's will to grant it, yet consider

¹ Ps. i. 1.
² Ps. i. 2.

³ Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
⁴ Jer. x. 23: "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

⁵ Judg. xvi. 19.

whose will it is—even his that is more ready to forgive than we are ready to ask forgiveness, and is rather a suitor to us to take a pardon¹ than stays for us to be suitors to have a pardon.

But may it not be thought, because blessedness is set here at a lower rate, that it is not so good a blessedness as the other? And then what is gotten by the bargain? A lower price, indeed, but meaner ware. But this cannot be, for blessedness admits no degrees of comparison: as blessed they that have their sins forgiven, as they (if any such were) that have no sins to forgive. For though blessedness be a positive thing, yet it is a superlative thing; and if there want anything of being a superlative, there must needs want something of being a blessedness. Blessed then are they that have their sins forgiven, for to be forgiven is as much as never to have been guilty; and to say, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, is all one as to say, Blessed are they that never sinned. When our sins are once forgiven, we are then at peace with God,² with whom, until they were forgiven, we were at enmity; and if no misery be comparable to this, to have God's displeasure, then no blessedness can be comparable to this, to have his favour;³ and his favour we shall be sure to have, if he forgive us our sins, and, therefore, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven.

But is all the way as smooth as this? Is there not a rub in the way here? For to say, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, is very plausible; but to say, Blessed are they whose sins are covered, seems to mar all; for what if my sins be so great that they cannot be covered, must I therefore be forced to lose my blessedness? It is true indeed, though my sins be in number as the sands of the sea, yet the sea is great enough to cover them all. But, alas, the sea covers not sins, though it cover the sinners; and what blessedness can there be in such a covering? If I go to the world to cover them, and indeed the world is wide, and no doubt a great coverer of sins; but,

¹ Cf. 2 Cor. v. 20: "As though God did beseech *you* by us," etc.

² Rom. v. 10.

³ Rom. v. 1.

alas, the world's covering is but hypocrisy, and what were this but to cover one sin with another, a lesser with a greater? and so I should be covering them still, and never cover them, but lay them more open in the sight of God than they were before. If I go to the heavens to cover them, and indeed the heavens are large, *Et tegit omnia coelum* [and the sky covers all]; but, alas, the heavens are full of lights, and will sooner discover that which is hidden than cover anything that lies open to view. Yet I may hope to get the cherubim to cover them, for they have broad wings, and of wonderful extent;¹ but, alas, the cherubim have use enough of their wings to cover their own faces;² they cannot with all their wings so much as cover the least of all my sins. And what hope, then, to have my sins covered, when neither the sea, nor the world, neither the heavens, nor the cherubims that are above the heavens, be able to cover them? Yet they must be covered, or there can be no blessedness. And how am I then in any better case for attaining of blessedness than I was before? Two ways propounded for attaining it, and both impossible. There, the price not possible to be paid; here, the bargain not possible to be performed. But, O thou that sittest in the heavens,³ O thou that ridest between the cherubims,⁴ blessed be thy glorious name,⁵ for thou camest thyself from heaven on purpose to cover them. Thou broughtest that with thee from heaven which only is able to cover them; for what can cover sins but righteousness? what cover infinite sins but infinite righteousness? and where is any infinite righteousness to be found but in him only that is infiniteness itself? Be comforted, therefore, my soul, for now it is not a hope, it is an assurance, that my sins at last shall come to be covered; it is not a hope, it is an assurance, that I shall come at last to this blessedness in covert.

There are some, perhaps, will grant that blessedness may consist in covering indeed, but not in covering of sins.

¹ Erek. xxviii. 14: "Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth." ² Isa. vi. 2: "With twain he covered his face." ³ Ps. lxxviii. 4: "Extol him that rideth upon the heavens." ⁴ Ps. lxxx. 1: "Thou that dwellest between the cherubims." ⁵ Ps. lxxii. 19.

They think rather in covering their tables with rich plate and dainty dishes, or in covering their houses with slates of gold, *aurea domus Neronis* [Nero's golden palace], or in covering their backs with silk and soft raiment, such as Christ saith are in kings' houses;¹ but Nebuchadnezzar will come in for one,² Dives³ for another, and Haman for a third,⁴ and give clear evidence that all these are deceived, and that David only tells us the truth. They, they only are the blessed men whose sins are covered.

But what needs all this scanning and discussing, for what more mystery is there in saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered, than if it were said, Blessed are they from whose iniquities thou turnest away thy face, and whose offences thou blottest out?⁵ Or (because the Scripture hath plenty of expressions of this kind) than if it were said, Blessed are they whose iniquities thou castest behind thy back,⁶ and whose sins thou removest from thee as far as the east is from the west;⁷ for to what tends this variety of expression, but either for illustration, or, at most, for vehemence of asseveration that our sins are pardoned? But if it be conceived to be not so much a divers expressing of the same way as an expressing of a divers way to blessedness, then, indeed, as being more mystical, it will be more misty for discerning clearly what the meaning of David is. Is it, then, that forgiving our sins is the work of God's mercy, for it is mercy's work only to forgive; covering our sins the work of his love, for love covers the multitude of sins,⁸ *not imputing our sins* [ver. 2],⁹ the work of his will, as he saith, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy,¹⁰ that so we may have here a threefold cord of God's goodness to rely upon for our blessedness? Or is it that remission is necessary for sins of commission, covering necessary for sins of omission; but not imputing may serve for sins of transmission, that is, for sins original, transmitted to us from our first parents? Or is it that

¹ Matt. xi. 8. ² Dan. iv. 31—33. ³ Luke xvi. 22, 23. ⁴ Esth. vii. 10. ⁵ Ps. li. 9: "Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities." ⁶ Isa. xxxviii. 17. ⁷ Ps. ciii. 12. ⁸ 1 Pet. iv. 8: "Charity shall cover the multitude of sins" (Gk. *ἀγαπάει*). ⁹ Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit *there is* no guile. ¹⁰ Rom. ix. 15.

forgiving is mentioned as the work of God the Father, whose work properly it is to forgive, as he saith, I am he that blotteth out transgressions?¹ Covering is mentioned as the proper work of God the Son, as with whose righteousness our sins are covered, and therefore St. Paul saith, Put ye on the Lord Christ Jesus.² Not imputing is mentioned as the work of the Holy Ghost, who, being all love, compassionates our infirmities;³ and so all the Persons in the Deity have a hand (as it is fit they should) in this great work of procuring to us our blessedness that, as at the making of man at first, so at the making of man blessed at last, they may all join together, and say, *Faciamus hominem ad imaginem nostram* [Let us make man in our image].⁴

As long as iniquities are unforgiven, the conscience lies, as it were, on a rack, tortured and tormented day and night; but as soon as there comes a pardon, it is presently taken off the rack and laid at ease; and is not this a blessedness? As long as our sins remain uncovered, God turns away his face and frowns upon us; but as soon as our sins be covered, he shows us again the light of his countenance;⁵ and is not this a blessedness? As long as our sins are imputed to us, we are in the state of Adam when he was cast out of Paradise; but as soon as we are freed from this imputation, we presently hear Christ say, This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise;⁶ and is not this again a blessedness? And is it not now that David expresseth it in three ways, to show that by it a godly man is not only blessed, but thrice blessed?

But seeing forgiving and covering and not imputing of sins are all but privative things, how can they make a blessedness, which is a positive thing? They may take away misery, but can never make a blessedness. But is not the very taking away of misery in this case a blessedness; for seeing we were ordained by God at first to a blessed estate, and nothing bars us from that estate but sin, are we not by the removing this bar either left in this estate, or at least restored to it again? O gracious God, grant me for-

¹ Isa. xliii. 25. ² Rom. xiii. 14.
³ Gen. i. 26. ⁴ Ps. lxxx. 3, 7, 19.

⁵ Rom. viii. 26: "helpeth our infirmities."
⁶ Luke xxiii. 43.

givenness of mine iniquities and the covering of my sins, and let me never come at heaven, if I make not of these privatives a Jacob's ladder to climb up to heaven.¹ Neither yet is remission of sins a mere privative, but it hath in it an influence of grace also, which brings with it a shower of blessings, turns Ebal into Gerizim,² and of the thief upon the cross makes a saint in Paradise.³

Hitherto David's doctrine we may well subscribe to, but what means he by this, And in whose spirit there is no guile?⁴ For if there be no guile in his spirit, what needs either covering or forgiving? But is it not, as Christ said of Nathaniel, Behold a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile? and yet who doubts but in Nathaniel there was sin? It seems therefore meant that though covering and forgiving be all God's work, yet there is a condition required in him whose sins are to be forgiven; and this is the condition, that there be no guile in his spirit, but that his repentance be sincere and unfeigned, and without hypocrisy. And it is as if he had said, Blessed is he whom God justifies, and justifying sanctifies;⁵ for having said, Blessed is he to whom the Lord imputeth no sin, which is our justification, it presently follows, And in whose spirit there is no guile, which is our sanctification. Or is it here annexed with a conjunction, perhaps to show that sanctification doth not so much follow, as it is annexed; and from the same breath of God's spirit riseth together with justification? Or is it therefore added lest we should think blessedness to be in such sort God's gift, as that there should be nothing required in us towards the attaining it; which yet is so in us that it is not of us, but must come from God to us? for, alas, else what spirit of ours could be without guile if it were not influenced by that spirit which is the truth itself?

It seems this is a doctrine in favour plainly of plain dealing; but is this a world for plain dealing to thrive in? and if no thriving, what blessedness? But is it not said of Jacob that he was a plain man?⁶ and yet would any man

¹ Gen. xxviii. 12: "The top of it reached to heaven." ² Deut. xi. 29. Luke xxiii. 43. ³ John i. 47: "Behold an Israelite indeed," etc. ⁴ Rom. viii. 30: "Whom he justified, them he also glorified." ⁵ Gen. xxv. 27.

desire to thrive better than he did, who went over Jordan with nothing but his staff, and returned back with multitudes of cattle?¹ Never therefore fear thriving by plain dealing, for God that requires plainness in thy dealing with him, will no doubt bless it in thy dealing with others; and they that make themselves rich by guile will but find themselves beguiled in the end, when God blows upon them,² and that they find that guile in their fortunes which they so greedily entertained in their spirits.

But why am I so earnest against guile in the spirit? Do I not herein speak against myself? [ver. 3];³ for was there not guile in my spirit when I held my peace for confessing my sins, and yet cried out for sense of my pain, as though I would have made God believe it was for sense of my sin? but God knows I was silent in that, and that silence is now cause of my roaring; for if I had spoken and confessed my sin at first, I might have been heard in a lower voice; but having deferred my repentance so long, what marvel if God be gone so far out of hearing that a lower voice than roaring will never be heard? Every sin we commit makes God to turn away his face and depart from us; and the longer time the sin is unrepented, the longer time he hath to go from us the farther; and the slower we are in repenting, the more he hastens his pace; and have we not need then to cry the louder to make him to hear us, that by long deferring our repentance is gone so far from us? Oh, the foolishness of men that defer repentance! for to defer the repenting of sins is a greater sin than the sins to be repented; and have we not need then of the louder voice to obtain forgiveness when to our former sins to be repented is added this great sin of deferring our repentance? O foolish tongue, how often hast thou spoken when it nothing concerned thee! and wouldst thou not speak now when it concerned thee so much? How often hast thou spoken at the urging of impatience, and wouldst thou not speak now at the entreaty of repentance? But why then is it said, *Non*

¹ Gen. xxxii. 10. ² Isa. xl. 24: "He shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither." ³ Ps. xxxii. 3: "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long."

ulli tacuisse nocet, as if to hold one's peace did never hurt any? Silence, indeed, never hurts any by sins of commission, but by sins of omission often; silence is never guilty of idle words, yet guilty often of idleness, in letting slip opportunity. And therefore Solomon's counsel seems much the sounder, There is a time to speak, and a time to hold one's peace;¹ and if there be a time for each of them, then each of them in their due time is good; out of time is bad. It is as great a fault to be silent when it is fit to speak as it is to speak when it is fit to be silent; and if any time be fit for speaking, unfit for silence, this is the time when sins are to be confessed, and when our iniquities are to be acknowledged and made known to God. Now therefore am I justly punished for my silence; for seeing I held my peace when it was fit to speak, now my speaking will not serve, but I am fain to roar; seeing I would not spend a few hours in prayer at first, now I am fain to lie crying and praying all the day long. Alas, to what a miserable state had I brought myself that could neither make use of my silence nor of my crying out; for if I held my peace, I concealed my sin, and the sore still festered more and more;² and if I cried out, it spent my spirits, and the very pain did age's work for it in my bones, and made them old while my body was young. The truth is, I felt myself in pain, but knew not what I ailed. I knew all was not well with me, but knew not well why it was so. Now, after much searching and examining the cause, I find what it was: it was even sin that lay all this while in my bosom, as a fire raked up in the embers of security, and burnt me to the very bone; but finding it to be sin, I was ashamed to confess it; and so between shame of revealing and danger of not revealing I lived a long time as a man distracted, holding my peace for very shame, and crying out for very pain. And alas, O Lord, how could I choose when it was *thy hand* that lay *heavy upon me* [ver. 4];³ thy hand of which it is said that with it thou dost terrible things;⁴ and that which is, in terror, the most terrible, when

¹ Eccles. iii. 7: "A time to keep silence, and a time to speak." ² Ps. lxxvii. 2: "Mysore ran in the night, and ceased not." ³ Ps. xxxii. 4: "For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer." ⁴ Ps. xlv. 4: "Thy righthand shall teach thee terrible things."

thou once beginnest thou never givest over ; thine anger is not as an ague, but as a fever ; comes not by fits, but is a continual fit without either remission or intermission ; and what marvel, then, if in this torrid zone of affliction my almond tree flourish¹ before the time, and my strong men bow themselves² under the burden ? As a flower that is parched with the sun and is ready to fall from the stalk that upheld it, and as earth that is overdried with the heat and is ready to crumble into dust and powder, such, O Lord, was I, while neither wind nor so much as a breath of thy favour blew upon me ; while neither shower nor so much as the dew of thy grace instilled into me ;³ and in this maze of distress whither could I think to turn myself for help ? I thought sometimes that time would help me, but alas ! time was no friend of mine ; for the longer time I stayed the more my sore festered and rankled within me. Then I thought that place might help me ; but, alas, I turned me from side to side, and could neither find rest in resting nor ease in motion. Then I thought of friends ; but, alas, my friends were my fortune's, and not mine ; they bore me fair in hand while the weather was fair, but as soon as a storm came they shrunk in the wetting. So I bethought me at last of a way which the world would rather think a precipice than a way, and yet, perplexed as I was, I thought best to venture it. *I said, I will confess my sins to God*⁴ [ver. 5]. A dangerous way, I vow, to go for help to him whom I had offended ; to look his hand should raise me up that had cast me down : yet see the event, or rather wonder at the wonderfulness of God's goodness : I confessed my sin to God, and he forgave me the iniquity of my sin. Oh, let every sinful soul take this from me : There is no such way in the torment of sin as to confess it to God. For it is not with God as it is with men. God's ways are not as men's ways ;⁵ if we confess a debt to men, no way but we must pay it ; but in a debt to

¹ Eccl. xii. 5. ² Eccl. xii. 3. ³ Hagg. i. 10, 11 : "The heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land," etc. ⁴ Ver. 5 : "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." ⁵ Isa. lv. 8.

God, the very confessing it is a payment,¹ and it is instead of ability that we acknowledge ourselves to be unable.

And indeed, O my soul! what danger can there be in confessing thy sins to God, who knows them already better than thyself? Thou informest him of nothing he knew not before; thou dost but discharge thy conscience, and prostrate thyself at the foot of his mercy; and he is the Lion of the tribe of Judah,² and who knows not that it is the noble nature of the lion to spare anything that prostrates itself before him? If Adam had confessed his sin to God, would God have cast him out of Paradise?³ If Eve had confessed her sin to God, should she have had such throes in her child-bearing?⁴ Oh, then, let every Adam that would recover Paradise, let every Eve that would have ease in her labour, confess their sins to God, for they may be confident a true confession shall never return either unregarded or unrewarded; that where it was said before, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered, we may now alter the style, and say, Blessed are they whose iniquities are confessed and whose sins are discovered; for if we confess them, God is just, and will forgive them;⁵ if we discover them, God is merciful, and will cover them; that as it was said of Abraham he believed, and it was counted to him for righteousness,⁶ so it shall be said of us we confess our iniquities, and it is imputed to us for innocency.

But is there nothing required to forgiveness of sins but only the confessing of them? Alas! confession is but a part of repentance; God's pardons are always entire, and is it likely that he will grant a whole pardon for only a piece of repentance? Indeed, so great is God's forwardness in showing of mercy, so great his favour towards penitent sinners, that as he useth the figure, I may say, of anticipation in his grace to them, so he accepts of the figure synecdoche in their performance to him. Though confession be but a part of repentance, yet if it be a true part he accepts

¹ 1 John i. 9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins."
² Rev. v. 5. ³ Gen. iii. 12, 24. ⁴ Gen. iii. 13, 16. ⁵ 1 John i. 9. ⁶ Rom. iv. 3.

it for the whole, and puts a penitent in possession of a full pardon upon his first payment. But then it must not be a bare confession, such as the earth was in the beginning, *vacua et informis* [void and without form],¹ of which it was not said, *et vidit Deus quod erat bonum* [and God saw that it was good],² as the confession of Pharaoh and Judas was, but it must be *confessio informata* [a confession not factitious], a confession of one in whose spirit is no guile;³ a confession not only *gravida* [pregnant], but *parturiens*, in labour, which is contrition, such as the publican's was, who in confessing struck his breast. And yet this is not all, but it must be a confession made to God.⁴ Pharaoh indeed confessed, but it was but to Moses;⁵ and Judas confessed, but it was but to the rulers,⁶—neither of them to God, as David doth here. And yet neither is this all, but it must be a confession with professing to confess, as it is here: I said, I will confess my sin to God [the LORD], and this kind of confession is so acceptable to God that, next to a martyr, he loves a confessor.

For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found; [ver. 6] for what favour can a prayer look to find that is made to one that is not to be found? But are there, then, critical times for finding of God, as there are for taking of physic, or for setting of figures in astrology? Is not God everywhere, and therefore to be found in any place? eternal, and may be found at any time? O my soul, it is neither time nor place that is any considerable circumstance for finding of God; but if thou wouldst know the true place to find him, indeed thou must look [for] him in thy heart; if the truest time, thou must observe thy repentance, for in a penitent heart are all the considerable circumstances for finding of God, either for time or place. Look [for] him there, and then thou shalt find him; look [for] him then, and there thou shalt find him. O then, my soul, if my heart be the true place for finding of God, had I not need to look [for] him there betimes? for how long am I sure I shall keep my heart? I may be sure not

¹ Gen. i. 2. ² Gen. i. 4, 10, 12, etc. (Vulgate, "Quod esset bonum.") ³ John i. 47. ⁴ Luke xviii. 13. ⁵ Exod. ix. 27. ⁶ Matt. xxvii. 4.

long, seeing it is always upon going, and makes all the haste it can to be gone; and if it should be gone before I find God in it, alas, my soul, there would be no finding him there for thee for ever; and as the heart is the true place, so what may we say is the true time when God may be found? What, no doubt, but the present time? for seeing in God there is neither time past nor time to come, how should we look to find him where he is not? For this, therefore, shall every one that is godly pray to God while he may be found,—that is, presently, and at this very instant,—and not defer repentance to the time to come, in which God is not found, no more than it is found in God.

God, no doubt, may be found at all times, but we are not at all times in case to find him; for how should we find him when we have no eyes to look [for] him? And am I sure I shall have eyes always? God knows, I am sure I shall not, for I find them to grow dimmer every day than other, and this dimness ere long must needs end in darkness. Oh, then, my soul, make haste to find God before the crystal of thine eyes be broken; for if thou tarry till then, there will be no finding him; and if not find him, no asking him forgiveness; and if not ask it, not have it; and not having forgiveness there will be no blessedness. For this shall every one that is godly pray to God while he may be found—that is, before his lights be put out, and before he go to dwell at the city of worms, in the dungeon of darkness. There is indeed no finding of God without repentance, and no repentance without faith, which, because it shall cease in the life to come, we must therefore find him now, or shall not at all, either here or hereafter.

But if no more but repentance be required for finding of God, what hinders but he may be found at any time, seeing what hinders but I may repent at any time? O my soul, who tells thee so? for hast thou the heart to break thy heart at any time? and if thou hast not, then canst thou not repent at any time, for true repentance is a breaking of the heart. Thou mayest perhaps quench the Spirit¹ when thou

¹ 1 Thess. v. 19: "Quench not the Spirit."

pleasest, but canst thou set it a-burning when thou pleasest? If thou canst not, then canst thou not repent when thou pleasest; for a true repentance is never without a burning ardour of God's Spirit.

But is there indeed any time when God may not be found? Is he like to some princes, who shut themselves up in state at times, and are not then to be spoken withal, or seen? O great God, thou art not like man, and therefore not found after their manner—found when only their persons are found; but to find thee is to find thee gracious, without which as good lost thou wert as found; and gracious can none find thee but only the penitent, and therefore for this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee, so that through the grace of a true repentance he may find thee gracious.

When a sin is committed, a shower of God's anger rains presently down upon the sinner, and continues raining till there be repentance; and if the repentance be deferred long, it may rain down anger so long till it make a flood, and then there will be no going near to God for water, but rather the water will go near to be a cause of drowning, for it is not every one's case to have an ark to save himself in from the flood of God's anger; he only may be confident to be saved that, like Noah, begins to make his ark betimes,¹ and returns to God with a speedy repentance.

But why is it said every one that is godly, and not, rather, every one that is wise, seeing it is wisdom, and not godliness, that can discern the fitness of times and seasons? Is it not that wisdom and godliness in spiritual matters are terms convertible: no true wisdom without godliness, no godliness without true wisdom; but therefore rather said godly than wise, because indeed there is no other godliness, though there be other wisdom.

And now, O my soul, consider the blessedness of a true repentance, and what a conversion it makes in a penitent heart. I could never think before but that the world was the safest sanctuary, the flesh the best paradise; but now I can say, Thou, O God, art my refuge from tribulation² [ver. 7],

¹ Gen. vi. 14. ² Ver. 7: "Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance."

thou my jubilee against all persecutions: the place from which I hid myself before is now become the place to hide me in, and that which I fled from before as my only terror I now fly to as my only succour. Before I repented, I thought that to go to God was to run upon a rock; but now I find it is to go into the haven. Before, I thought still upon that saying, A man shall leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife;¹ but now I find that *adherere Deo bonum est*, there is no blessedness but in cleaving to God. Before I repented, I aspired to nothing but to sit at Dives' table,² and to fare deliciously every day. I took pleasure in nothing but in wearing soft raiment, in mirth and jollity; but now I find that all the dishes I fed on there were poison. I find there is no wearing like to sackcloth, no sweet powder like to ashes, and say to laughter, Thou art mad.³ Thou, O Christ, art the true food that nourisheth to eternal life;⁴ thou the true garment⁵ that gives me entrance to the marriage of the Lamb, and makest me to hear the melody of heaven in the choir of angels. Before I repented, I said to the world, Egypt, thou art my staff;⁶ and to the flesh, Delilah,⁷ thou art my joy; but now I can say, Thou, O God, art my refuge in all tribulations;⁸ thou the joy of my heart against all my persecutors.

But, O the vanity of the world, have I lived to hear that glorious acclamation, Saul hath killed his thousand, and David his ten thousand,⁹ and is my glory come now to this, that I am glad of a place to hide me in? Indeed, *sic transit gloria mundi* [so passes the glory of the world]. But, O my body, never do thou trouble thyself for the matter, for thou art sure enough of a place to hide thee, seeing a span or two of earth will serve thy turn. It is thou, my soul, that makest me glad of a place to hide me, for thou indeed art not easily hidden; thou liest open to all assaults of Satan, to all temptations of the world, and that which is more than these, to the angry hand of God;

¹ Gen. ii. 24. ² Luke xvi. 19. ³ Eccl. ii. 2: "I said of laughter, *It is mad.*"
⁴ John vi. 33: "The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." ⁵ Matt. xxii. 11, 12. ⁶ Isa. xxxvi. 6: "Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt."
⁷ Judg. xvi. 4. ⁸ Ps. xlv. 1: "A very present help in trouble." ⁹ 1 Sam. xviii. 7.

and from this it is chiefly I am glad of a place to hide me, though the world may think it strange I should go to God to hide me from God. But, O foolish world, it is not strange, for I go to God's mercy to hide me from his justice; for God forbid I should be of those that call to the mountains to cover them, and to the hills to hide them.¹ No, dear Jesus, thou art the mountain that must cover me, thou the sanctuary that I fly unto, to which, if Joab had fled, it had not been *Abner* [Benaiah] that could have drawn him forth.²

But had not David towers³ and fortresses to defend him? and could he not be safe unless he were hidden? And say he were brought to a necessity of hiding himself, yet is he well advised to make choice of God for his place to hide him? The darkest places are fittest for hiding; and what hiding then could he look for of God, who is nothing but light?⁴ O my soul, there is no hiding so excellent as to be hidden with light; for thither my enemies, who are children of darkness, can never come. When I am hidden with light, I can see my enemies, and they not see me,—not much unlike the advantage that God himself hath over us.⁵ When I am hidden with light, there is more glory in the light than disparagement in the hiding; and have I not reason then to make choice of God, who dwells in light inaccessible,⁶ for my place to hide me? Others' hiding can but keep me from the eyes of my enemies; it cannot keep me from the hands of my enemies. God's hiding can do both; for *thou, O God, shalt preserve me from trouble*. Though in others' hiding, enemies perhaps cannot, yet troubles at least may find me out; but when thou hidest me,⁷ as enemies cannot, so troubles dare not, I shall be as free from the fear as from the sense of troubles. And yet, O God, if thou shouldst only preserve me from trouble, this were no more than I might enjoy if I were a senseless

¹ Hos. x. 8; Luke xxiii. 30. ² 1 Kings ii. 28, 34: "And Joab fled into the tabernacle of the LORD, and caught hold on the horns of the altar. . . . So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up, and fell upon him, and slew him." ³ Song iv. 4: "Thy neck is like the tower of David, builded for an armoury," etc. ⁴ 1 John i. 5: "God is light." ⁵ Gen. xvi. 13: "Thou God seest me." ⁶ John i. 18: "No man hath seen God at any time." ⁷ 1 Tim. vi. 16: "Dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto." ⁸ Ps. xxvii. 5: "In the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion."

creature, for what trouble where there is no sense? But thy hiding will do more than this; it will *compass me about with songs of deliverance*; and this will give me a sense, and in that sense a delight of the happiness I enjoy by the benefit of thy hiding.

If thou shouldst deliver me but in part, I should in part be in bondage still; and what would my state be the better for this, seeing, in this case, all figures are synecdoches—a part here as much as the whole? To be a prisoner in part is to be a prisoner altogether; but when thou compasseth me about with deliverance, this leaves no place for synecdoches, but gives me a total and absolute freedom, and makes me obnoxious to no molestation. And yet if thou shouldst also compass me with deliverance, and so leave me, I might be still both insensible of it in myself and unthankful for it to thee, and so my state but little the better for this either; but when thou compasseth me about with songs of deliverance; this makes me a chorister in the choir—I might say of angels, but that their songs are all songs of jubilee,¹ and mine only of deliverance. O my soul, God is not a deliverer like a half-moon, bright in one part and dark in another; but he is a deliverer like the sun—his deliverance shines always the whole compass; and with his deliverance he delivers also songs of thankfulness to him, and in myself of joyfulness.

But what need is there of plurality of songs: may not one song serve; and if one may, what need many? One song perhaps may serve for one deliverance; but if there be many deliverances, must there not be many songs? And must there not be many deliverances when there are many bondages? And are there not many bondages when I incur a new bondage as often as I commit a new sin?² And yet another reason as great as this: for say that God's deliverance be but one, will that one deliverance require but one song? O my soul, it deserves, and therefore requires, I say not a plurality, but an infinity of songs; for there must be

¹ Jubilee, understood as a period of rejoicing in music, and so a time of rest, see Lev. xxv. 11, 12. It however includes the idea of deliverance and restoration, see context *loc. cit.*

² John viii. 34: Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."

some songs to express it, and others to extol it; some songs of *miserere*, and others of *magnificat*; some *de profundis*, and others *in excelsis*; ¹ some songs of praise, and others of thanksgiving; and though there will be a time when all these songs shall be collected into one, and so collected make the great *Canticum Canticorum* [Song of Songs], yet till that time come there will be need of many songs; and seeing I shall need many, I hope, O God, thou wilt not see me want, and tie me to one song, but wilt compass me about with songs of deliverance.

But alas, O Lord, I am far as yet from being compassed with songs of deliverance; I have not so much as one song of deliverance to sing; for how should I sing of deliverance that am still in bondage? how sing at all that am still a-weeping? But I know thy goodness, O God; I know how much thou delightest in the music of thanksgiving; and therefore am assured the time will come, and (considering the haste thou makest) will come speedily, that thou wilt compass me about with songs of deliverance.

But have I been all this while right in the understanding of David's meaning, where he saith, Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance; for are they songs that are sung for me, or songs that are sung by me? If sung for me, then they are men and angels² that sing them, as rejoicing for my deliverance. If sung by me, then it is I, O God, that sing them to thee, as giving thanks for my deliverance.³ Songs of deliverance, of my deliverance, that I am delivered; or songs of deliverance, of thy deliverance, that thou hast delivered me: take them in either sense, and David is pleased; take them either way, and God is glorified. So there need be no question of this, yet of this there will be question, How I can be sure of repenting if I am not sure to repent when I list? And this question David seems to answer, putting the matter upon God, and therefore brings

¹ *Miserere*, a cry for mercy, a litany whose refrain is "Lord, have mercy upon me." *Magnificat*, a song of praise like that of Mary, "My soul doth magnify the Lord" (Luke i. 46, etc.); *De profundis*, a psalm of the tempted and despairing, "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD" (Ps. cxxx.); *In excelsis*, an anthem of exuberant joy, like the angel's song, "Glory to God in the highest," etc. (Luke ii. 14).

² Luke xv. 7, 10

³ Isa. xii. 2, 3; cf. Ps. xl. 3, xcviii. 1.

God in as speaking thus : I will give thee understanding, and will instruct thee in the way that thou shalt walk : I will fix mine eye upon thee¹ [ver. 8]. And God's instructions are never in vain ; for with the lessons he gives, he gives also an aptness to understand them ; and with the aptness a capacity to perform them ; and then having God for an instructor, by teaching thee the way, and for an overseer, by fixing his eye upon thee, how canst thou doubt of profiting in a learning where all the learning is but one lesson of repentance ? Repentance, indeed, is but one lesson, but it is the hardest lesson in all the book ; and we may see how hard it is by the great ado that is about it ; for, first, God must give us understanding for it, and this will not be enough ; then he must give us instruction in it, and neither will this be enough ; then he must have a continual eye upon us to hold us to it, and all these together will be but little enough : alas, all these together will be too little, and not enough, if we be wanting to ourselves. Be not therefore, O my soul, like the vineyard of which God said, What could I do more to my vineyard than I did, and yet it hath brought forth nothing but wild grapes ?² No, my soul, be not like to horse and mule that have no understanding³ [ver. 9] ; when thou art showed the right way, do not wilfully run another way ; when one comes to dress and comb thee, do not offer to bite and strike ; do not cast thy riders, nor kick at thy rulers ; be not headstrong like the horse, nor lazy like the mule, for if thou use thyself like a horse and a mule, thou must look to be used like a horse and a mule—have a bridle put in thy mouth, and a snaffle in thy jaws ; and if these will not serve, a spur and a rod too, to quicken and beat understanding into thee. For consider, O my soul, in what state thou standest ; though thou have understanding, as being made *ad similitudinem Dei* [towards the likeness of God],⁴ yet if thou use not understanding, thou makest thyself

¹ Ver. 8 : "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go : I will guide thee with mine eye." (Auth. Vers.) The citation in the text is from the Vulgate, "Intellectum tibi dabo, et instruam te in viâ hac, qua gradieris : firmabo super te oculos meos." ² Isa. v. 4. ³ Ps. xxxii. 9 : "Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding ; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee." ⁴ Vulg., Gen. i. 27.

ad similitudinem bruti [to the likeness of a beast], or rather so much worse than a beast as corruption makes worse than privation; for if a man shall do that by abusing reason which a horse doth by wanting reason, shall he not do it, not only with more shame, but with more violence, as making that an instrument of stubbornness which was given for a furtherance of obedience? Is it not a shameful thing that a man should be bridled and spurred as a horse? yet if he use not understanding, but will be like a horse, he must be so; for as understanding is the stern,¹ I may say, of a man, to direct him in his course, so a bridle is the stern of a horse to guide him in his way; and he that will not take into his heart his own stern of understanding, must be forced to take into his mouth the horse's stern of a bridle; for a stern he must have,—no remedy,² either his own stern or a horse's, either understanding or a bridle, that we may truly say there is not a more necessary trade in the world than a bridle-maker is, seeing without such a one there would be no living in the world for the multitude of unruly horses.

And thus when men grow so wicked and so void of understanding, to be like horse and mule, it may justly then be said, Many are the troubles of the wicked [ver. 10];³ for there will be troubles of bridle, and troubles of snaffle, troubles of spur, and troubles of rod, from all which the godly are free. No bridle in their mouths, because they do that willingly which the foolish horse will not do but by constraint. No spur in their sides, because, with the assistance of God's grace, they use understanding, and run readily of themselves to the mark⁴ that is before them.

But why, then, should David in another place say, Many are the troubles of the righteous? for by this it should seem there is nothing lost by being wicked, nothing gotten by being righteous, for whether wicked or righteous, there will be troubles still. It is true there will be troubles, but is there not a difference? The troubles of the godly are but only outward, but the troubles of the wicked are in-

¹ Rudder. ² Inevitably. ³ "Many sorrows *shall be* to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about." (Auth. Vers.) ⁴ Phil. iii. 14: "I press toward the mark for the prize," etc.

ward rather; the troubles of the godly are but to exercise them, but the troubles of the wicked tend to ruin. The troubles of the wicked have a corrosive—I may say, a worm, within them; but the troubles of the godly have a cordial—I may say, a kernel, within them, a sweet kernel indeed that makes ample amends for all the hardness and fracture of their shell. The troubles of the wicked have no deliverer; but of the troubles of the godly it is said, The Lord shall deliver them out of all.¹ And all this long of God's mercy that compasseth them about. It is, no doubt, a strong fortress to the godly that the angels pitch their tents about them;² but it is a far stronger that God's mercy compasseth them about; for that which is but ministerial in the angels is primitive in God; and though the ministry of angels may be, yet God's mercy can never be, frustrate, and especially when it compasseth about, for then neither troubles on the right hand nor troubles on the left, neither tumours of prosperity nor gripings of adversity,—then, neither troubles before them nor troubles behind them, neither agonies of terror nor racks of persecution, shall ever come so near them as to touch them,—at least, not so prevail against them as to hurt them. That, notwithstanding all their troubles, it shall be justly said still, Be glad ye that are righteous, and rejoice in the Lord: shout for joy, all ye that are upright of heart [ver. 11].³

And may it not be as well said to the wicked, Be glad, and shout for joy? or, rather, have they not more cause for rejoicing than the godly? The wicked, indeed, may rejoice to see their full barns and their full bags; but, alas, what becomes of their joy when they hear it said, *Stulte, hac nocte repelent animam tuam* [Thou fool, this night shall they require thy soul]?⁴ They may rejoice to sit with Belshazzar, at their full cups, in revelling and feasting; but, alas, what becomes of their rejoicing when they see it written upon the wall before them, Mene, Tekel, Peres?⁵ All gladness of the world is often converted, always convertible,

¹ Ps. xxxiv. 19. ² Ps. xxxiv. 7. ³ Ps. xxxii. 11: "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart."
⁴ Luke xii. 20. ⁵ Dan. v. 25—28.

into sorrow; only the gladness that is in God never suffers eclipse. A single kind of joy the wicked may have, but because their rejoicing is in the world, and not in God, they are far, God knows, from shouting for joy. None but the righteous rejoice in the Lord, and therefore none but the righteous can shout for joy. This David did when he danced before the ark,¹ and this Abraham did when, *exultavit ut videret diem Domini*, he leaped for joy to see the day of Christ.² Is there a shouting for joy at Olympic games, where but a garland is gotten, perhaps of bay, at most but of some fading matter; and shall there not be shouting for joy at the game of the great Olympus [heaven], where there will be a crown gotten of glory, that shall never wither nor fade away? O my soul, there will be the victory, that is only worthy of shouting for joy, which, as it is common to all the godly, is proper to only the godly, who being upright in heart, and having their conversation in heaven³ already, they see, with clearer eyes than Abraham saw, Christ's day, the saints expecting them, the angels ready to receive them, and that which is more than the most that can be said or thought, God himself preparing for them their several mansions of beatitude;⁴ [so] that we may justly conclude as we began: Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth no sin, and in whose spirit there is no guile.⁵

¹ 2 Sam. vi. 14—16. ² John viii. 56: "Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad." Quoted from Vulgate, "*exultavit ut videret diem meum.*"

³ Phil. iii. 20. ⁴ John xiv. 2: "I go to prepare a place for you." ⁵ Ps. xxxii. 1, 2.

O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath : neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. 2. For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. 3. *There is* no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger ; neither *is there any* rest in my bones because of my sin. 4. For mine iniquities are gone over mine head : as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me. 5. My wounds stink *and* are corrupt because of my foolishness. 6. I am troubled ; I am bowed down greatly ; I go mourning all the day long. 7. For my loins are filled with a loathsome *disease* : and *there is* no soundness in my flesh. 8. I am feeble and sore broken : I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart. 9. Lord, all my desire *is* before thee ; and my groaning is not hid from thee. 10. My heart panteth, my strength faileth me : as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me. 11. My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore ; and my kinsman stand afar off. 12. They also that seek after my life lay snares *for me* : and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long. 13. But I, as a deaf *man*, heard not ; and *I was* as a dumb man *that* openeth not his mouth. 14. Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth *are* no reproofs. 15. For in thee, O LORD, do I hope : thou wilt hear, O Lord my God. 16. For I said, *Hear me*, lest *otherwise* they should rejoice over me : when my foot slippeth, they magnify *themselves* against me. 17. For I *am* ready to halt, and my sorrow *is* continually before me. 18. For I will declare mine iniquity ; I will be sorry for my sin. 19. But mine enemies *are* lively, *and* they are strong : and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied. 20. They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries ; because I follow *the thing that good is*. 21. Forsake me not, O LORD : O my God, be not far from me. 22. Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation.—PSALM xxxviii. (Auth. Vers.)

MEDITATIONS AND DISQUISITIONS

UPON

THE THIRTY-EIGHTH PSALM.

BUT is it not an absurd request to require God not to rebuke me in his anger, as though I thought he would rebuke me if he were not angry? [ver. 1.]¹ Is it not a senseless suit to pray to God not to chasten me in his displeasure, as though he would chasten me if he were not displeased? The frowardest natures that are will yet be quiet as long as they be pleased; and shall I have such a thought of the great yet gracious God, that he should be pleased, and yet not be quiet? But O my soul, is it all one to rebuke in his anger, and to rebuke when he is angry? He may rebuke when he is angry, and yet restrain and bridle in his anger; but to rebuke in his anger is to let loose the reins to his anger; and what is it to give the reins to his anger but to make it outrun his mercy? And then what a miserable case should I be in, to have his anger to assault me, and not his mercy ready to relieve me? to have his indignation fall upon me when his lovingkindness were not by to take it off? Oh, therefore, *rebuke me not in thine anger*, O God; but let thy rebuking stay for thy mercy; chasten me not in thy displeasure, but let thy lovingkindness have the keeping of thy rod.

But though the request be never so just, yet must it not needs be a wearisome thing to God to have us always come to him with the same petition, as though we would persecute him with importunity, and make him do that which he is

¹ Ps. xxxviii. 1: "O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure."

not willing to do?¹ For if he were willing to grant it, he would no doubt have done it before now, when in the sixth Psalm² we asked him as earnestly for it as we can do in this. But, O my soul, is importunity a fault? If it be, it is a fault I shall hardly be persuaded ever to leave. Did Christ count it a fault in the woman of Canaan, who would take no answer, but still cried after him till he granted her suit?³ Did not Abraham importune God five [six] times about the sparing of Sodom?⁴ and did not God grant as long as he importuned? and may we not think that if he had continued his importunity still, he might as well have gotten Sodom to be spared for one man's sake as he had done for ten? Is God like man, that the importunity of suitors should be a trouble to him? Can we think that God should be displeased with our importunity to him, when he is pleased to use importunity himself to us? Did not God call to Samuel three [four] times, one after another, when he bid him go to Eli with a message?⁵ Was it not importunity which Christ used to Peter when thrice together he asked him, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?⁶ Indeed, Peter seemed not well pleased with this importunity; but God never was, never will be, found to be displeased with it. Never, therefore, fear to be importunate with God, but fear rather thou canst never be importunate enough; for so highly is God pleased, or rather indeed delighted, with our importunity in praying, that he oftentimes denies the first suit of his servants because he would be importuned by a second, oftentimes the second because he would have a third. Indeed that which in suits to men is importunity, in suits to God is fervency and perseverance, and seems to resemble the nature of the Seraphim;⁷ where single prayer but of ordinary angels, of whom as some fell, so this may fail, and often doth; the other never.

But though importunity be to God most pleasing always, yet to us it is then most necessary when the cheerful face

¹ See Luke xviii. 1-7 (the parable of the importunate widow.) ² Ps. vi. 1.
³ Mark vii. 25-30. ⁴ Gen. xviii. 24, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32. ⁵ 1 Sam. iii. 4, 6, 8, 10, etc.
⁶ John xxi. 15-17. ⁷ Isa. vi. 2, 3: "Above it stood the seraphims. . . And one cried unto another and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."

of God is turned into frowns, and when there is a justly conceived fear of the continuance of his anger. And have not I just cause to fear it, having the *arrows* of his anger *sticking so fast in me*? [ver. 2.]¹ If he had meant to make me but a butt at which to shoot his arrows, he would quickly, I suppose, have taken them up again; but now that he leaves them sticking in me, what can I think but that he means to make me his quiver? and then I may look long enough before he come to pluck them out. They are arrows, indeed, that are feathered with swiftness and headed with sharpness; and to give them a force in flying, they are shot, I may say, out of his cross-bow,—I am sure, his bow of crosses; for no arrows can fly so fast, none pierce so deep, as the crosses and afflictions with which he hath surprised me. I may truly say surprised me, seeing when I thought myself most safe, and said, I shall never be moved,² even then these arrows of his anger lighted upon me, and stick so fast in my flesh, that no arm but his that shot them is ever able to draw them forth. O then, as thou hast stretched forth thine arm of anger, O God, to shoot these arrows at me, so stretch forth thine arm of mercy to draw them forth, that I may rather sing hymns than dirges unto thee; and that thou mayest show thy power as well in pardoning as thou hast done in condemning. I, alas, am as an anvil under two hammers—one of thine anger, another of my sin [ver. 3],³ both of them beating incessantly upon me,—the hammer of thine anger beating upon my flesh, and making that unsound; the hammer of my sin beating upon my bones, and making them unquiet; although, indeed, both beat upon both, but thine anger more upon my flesh, as being more sensible; my sin more upon my bones, as being more obdurate. God's anger and sin are the two efficient causes of all misery; but the procatastic cause⁴ indeed is sin. God's anger, like the house that Samson pulled upon his own head, falls not upon us but when we pull it upon ourselves⁵ by sin.

¹ Ps. xxxviii. 2: "For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thine hand presseth me sore." ² Ps. x. 6; xxx. 6, etc. ³ Ps. xxxviii. 3: "There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin."

⁴ The prime and originating cause, from προκατάρχομαι, to begin first. ⁵ Judg. xvi. 30.

I know by the unsoundness of my flesh that God is angry with me, for if it were not for his anger my flesh would be sound. But what soundness can be in it now, when God's angry hand lies beating upon it continually, and never ceaseth? I know by the unquietness of my bones that I have sin in my bosom, for if it were not for sin my bones would be quiet. But what quietness can be in them now when sin lies gnawing upon them incessantly with the worm¹ of remorse? One would think my bones were far enough removed, and closely enough hidden, from sin's doing them any hurt; yet see the searching nature, the venomous poison of sin, which pierceth through my flesh, and makes unquietness in my very bones.

I know my flesh is guilty of many faults, by which it justly deserves unsoundness. But what have my bones done? for they minister no fuel to the flames of my flesh's sensuality; and why then should they be troubled? But are not my bones supporters of my flesh, and are they not by this, at least, accessory to my flesh's faults? As accessories, then, they are subject to the same punishment the flesh itself is, which is the principal.

I cannot but wonder at this condition in myself. There is nothing I more loathe than sin, yet nothing I more willingly embrace; nothing that I more abhor, yet nothing I more readily entertain. What marvel, then, if there be unsoundness in my flesh, and unquietness in my bones, when I will needs be taking so turbulent a guest, so deadly a poison as sin is, into my bosom, and make an idol of that which I know so well to be a monster?

As a man that stands in the water as long as it comes but to his middle, or but up to his shoulders, endures and bears it safely enough, but when it comes once to go over his head, it then overwhelms, and presently strangles him, such, alas, am I. My sin a long time came, I may say, but up to my shoulders, and then I thought myself safe enough; now God knows I am over head and ears in sin [ver. 4],² and so overwhelmed with it that my breath is taken from me, and

¹ Isa. lxvi. 24; Mark ix. 48.

² Ps. xxxviii. 4: "For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me." (A.V.)

I have not so much as any breath of grace remaining in me. No strength is so great but it may be overburdened, though Samson went light away with the gates of *Azzah* [Gaza],¹ yet when a whole house fell upon him it crushed him to death. And such, alas, am I. I have had sin as a burden upon me ever since I was born, but bore them a long time as light as Samson did the gates of *Azzah*; but now that I have pulled a whole house of sin upon me, how can I choose but be crushed to death with so great a weight? And crushed, O my soul, thou shouldst be indeed, if God, for all his anger, did not take some pity on thee; and for all his displeasure, did not stay his hand from further chastening thee.

I know, O Lord, I have done most foolishly to let my sores run so long without seeking for help; for now my wounds stink and are corrupt² [ver. 5], in as ill a case as Lazarus' body was when it had been four days buried;³ enough to make any man despair that did not know thee as I do; for do not I know that *nullum tempus occurrit tibi* [no time (no condition of things) withstands thee]? Do not I know thou hast as well wisdom to remedy my foolishness as power to cure my wounds? Could the grave hold Lazarus when thou didst but open thy mouth to call him forth?⁴ No more can the corruption of my sores be any hindrance to their healing when thy pleasure is to have them be cured. Although therefore I have done my own discretion wrong to defer my care, yet I will not do thy power wrong to despair of thy cure; for how should I despair who know thee to be as powerful as thou art merciful, if I may not rather say to be as merciful as thou art powerful; each of them indeed an *abyssus*, and when *abyssus abyssum vocat* [deep calleth unto deep]⁵ what marvel if there follow marvels?

And as I do not despair, so neither do I presume; for I am troubled, *I am bowed down, and go mourning all the day long*¹ [ver. 6]. I am troubled no less with the grief of

¹ Judg. xvi. 1, 3. (The form *Azzah* is another transliteration of צָצָה, and is used in Deut. ii. 23; 1 Kings iv. 24; and Jer. xxv. 20). ² Ps. xxxviii. 5; "My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness." (A.V.) ³ John xi. 39. ⁴ John xi. 43, 44. ⁵ Ps. xlii. 7.

thy displeasure than with the pain of my wounds, each of them alone just cause of mourning, but both of them together of mourning all the day long.

I have told heretofore how I spend my night: all the night I water my bed with tears.² Now I tell how I spend my day: all the day long in mourning. And can it be, O God, thou shouldst neither regard my weeping nor my mourning, neither my weeping all night nor my mourning all day?

If my flesh had continued as God made it, there had been in it both soundness and beauty; but, alas, my sin and his arrows, his arrows by reason of my sin, have so wounded it that it is nothing now but a very cistern of corruption; for all sin hath poison in it, and breeds diseases,—infinite diseases in the soul, loathsome diseases in the body. And what will not diseases do in these bodies of ours, whose spirits can be so erect, but will be dejected; whose limbs so strong, but will be bowed down; whose heart so cheerful, but will be made to mourn with the violence of diseases? And now therefore am I dejected, I am bowed down, I go mourning all the day long; and may I not say with the worst kind of mourning, the mourning perhaps of the chine, like horse and mule that have no understanding? For *my loins are filled with a loathsome disease* [ver. 7],³ the very disease that made Elijah⁴ and John Baptist⁵ to wear girdles of beasts' skins about their loins, and they with wearing such girdles prevented in themselves the loathsomeness of this disease; but I, alas, never thought of any girdle, much less of beasts' skins, and therefore the disease is now grown so loathsome upon me that it hath filled my loins—so filled them, that it hath not so much as a spare room left to make a perfume in; so loathsome, that it makes me fit for no company but lazars, for no place but an hospital; for how should others endure the stench of my sores when I am not able to endure it myself? How much less, O God, canst thou endure it, whose pure sense is sensible even of that impurity which

¹ Ps. xxxviii. 6: "I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long." (A. V.) ² Ps. vi. 6: "All the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears." ³ Ps. xxxviii. 7: "For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh." ⁴ 2 Kings i. 8. ⁵ Matt. iii. 4; Mark i. 6.

is to us insensible in the stars themselves?¹ Thou, O God, didst vouchsafe this favour to our first parents to make them garments of beasts' skins to cover their nakedness,² and may we not be bold to think that the girdles of beasts' skins which Elijah and John Baptist wore about their loins were also of thy making? Oh then vouchsafe, O God, to give me such a girdle to wear about my loins, a girdle of continence and true mortification, which though it cannot now, as in Elijah and John Baptist it did, prevent the growth and loathsomeness of concupiscence in me, it may at least, as in Mary Magdalene, restrain it, and make me capable of being cured.

And as I have not despaired nor presumed, so neither have I murmured nor repined at thy chastisements [ver. 8];³ I acknowledge myself most worthy to suffer them, but most unable to bear them. I am dejected no less in body than in spirit; and yet though I could not speak for weakness, I have roared for grief, and the unquietness of my heart hath supplied the feebleness of my tongue. Indeed, if I could have been a Boanerges, and have gotten a voice like thunder,⁴ I should have used it now in speaking to thee, that if my importunity before could not, at least my loudness now might prevail with thee to procure thee to hear me; for *I am feeble and sore broken, I have roared through the unquietness of my heart*. All long of the unquietness of my heart, all long of my sin; for where sin is there will never be but unquietness of heart, and an unquiet heart will always produce these miserable effects, feebleness of body, dejectedness of mind, and roaring of voice.

But how can roaring stand with feebleness, which seems to require a strength of spirits? Is it not therefore a roaring, perhaps, not so much in loudness as in an inarticulate expressing? that having done actions more like a beast than a man, I am forced to use a voice not so much of a man as of a beast? Or is it, perhaps, a roaring in spirit, which the heart may send forth though the body be feeble, or rather

¹ Job xxv. 5. ² Gen. iii. 21. ³ Ps. xxxviii. 8: "I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart." (A.V.) ⁴ Mark iii. 17.

then most when it is most feeble : not unlike the blaze of a candle, then greatest when going out ? Howsoever it be, this is certain : the heart is that unhappy plot of ground which, receiving into it the accursed seed of sin, brings forth in the body and soul of man these miserable fruits ; and how then can I be free from these weeds of the fruits, that have received into me so great a measure of the seed ? Oh, vile sin ! that I could as well avoid thee as I can see thee, or could as easily resist thee as I deadly hate thee : I should not then complain of either feebleness of body, or dejectedness of mind, or roaring of voice ; but I should perfectly enjoy that happy quietness in all my parts which thou, O God, didst graciously bestow as a blessed dowry on our first parents at their creation. And now, O my soul, let me ask thee a question : Why art thou cast down, and why art thou disquieted within me ? Hope thou in God, for I will yet praise him who is the health of my countenance and my God.¹ But what need was there of roaring ? for what matter is it whether I speak to God in a soft voice or in a loud ? seeing thou knowest, O God, the very thoughts of my heart, *and my groaning is not hid from thee*² [ver. 9]. Though I speak not, but only think to speak, yet thou knowest it ; though I think not, but only groan to think, yet thou knowest it ; and knowing these things, thou knowest, O God, that my grief is more for thy displeasure than for my wounds ; less for the pain I feel of thine arrows sticking in me, than for the unkindness I take at thy shooting them at me. As the love with which thou givest is more dear to me than thy gifts, so the anger with which thou strikest is more grievous to me than thy rod ; and alas, O Lord, how can I then choose but roar through the unquietness of my heart, when I want both thy gifts and thy love too, and yet feel thy rod and thine anger too ? *All my desire, O Lord, is ever before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee.* But what avails it me that my desire be all before thee, if it be not all for thee ? what avails it me that my groaning be not hid from thee, if it be not made to thee ? If I desire anything besides thee, that desire is from weakness, and then thou

¹ Ps. xlii. 5, 11 ; xliii. 5. ² Ps. xxxviii. 9 : " Lord, all my desire is before thee ; and my groaning is not hid from thee." (A. V.)

regardest it not ; if I groan to any but thee, that groaning is from vainness, and then thou seest it not ; but now that my desire is only for thee, and my groaning only to thee, now I know thou both seest and regardest them, and I doubt not, O God, but me for them.

But alas, O Lord, this is not yet the whole chapter of my misery ; for besides this, *My heart panteth, my strength faileth me ; and as for the light of mine eyes, that also is gone from me* [ver. 10]. And what is my heart, but the foundation ? what my strength, but the pillars ? what mine eyes, but the windows of my building ? If these, then, be ruined, how can my whole building choose but be demolished ? My heart is not wont to pant but in some great agony ; nor my strength to fail but in some great conflict ; nor my sight to go from me but in some great disaster : how great then, alas, must my agony be, how hard my conflict, how grievous my disaster, when my heart, my strength, my sight, all fail me at once ? Though my heart panted, yet if my strength continued I should have a support ; or though my strength failed, yet if my sight continued I should have a guide ; but when they all fail, and fail at once, alas, O Lord, how can I choose but fall, that have neither strength to support me nor eyes to guide me ? Thou, O God, must say to my heart, Be of good cheer :¹ thou must say to my strength, I will be thy fortress :² thou must say to mine eyes, I will be thy light :³ and then, and not till then, shall I ever have ease, or confidence, or consolation.

It is some comfort to men in misery when they have their friends about them, if not to relieve them, yet at least to pity them ; for even pity is a comfort to men in misery ; but so miserable am I, that I am left alone as one utterly forsaken, for even *my lovers and friends stand aloof from me,*⁴ and *my kinsmen stand afar off* [ver. 11]. They are all pieces that recoil and fly back at the first voice of the powder. Yet it is not so much me they stand aloof from as my sore ; for if it were not for my sore, I should have enough of their company easily

¹ John xvi. 33. ² Ps. xviii. 2 : "The LORD is my rock, and my fortress."
³ Isa. lx. 20 : "The LORD shall be thine everlasting light." ⁴ Ps. xxxviii. 11 :
 "From my sore." (A. V.)

enough; but they cannot abide sores; their eyes are too tender to endure to see them, and yet hard enough not to relieve them. Or is it they stand aloof—that is, so near as to show they are willing enough to see them, but yet so far off as to show they have no meaning to come and help them? But call you these lovers and friends,—men that flutter about us like flies in the summer of prosperity, but vanish and are gone in the winter of adversity? Are friends but painted flowers, only for show, and nothing at all for use? or if true flowers, yet only to make nosegays of, and never to make medicine of? Is there use of physicians but when there are sores, and when sores come will not they be gotten to come? Is there use of friends but in time of need, and when need comes will they then be gone? But alas, O Lord, was it not so with Christ himself?—company enough, friends enough, when there was no need; but as soon as Judas comes with a band of men, scarce a man found that will be gotten to tarry;¹ and if they used the Master so, can I that am a servant look to be better used?²

But say you call them friends, yet how can you call them lovers? for it is the nature of love to be readiest at hand when there be troubles at hand. Doth not the elm, a lover of the vine, support the vine, when itself would sink down and fall to the ground? Doth not the vine stick close to the elm, and if the elm chance to fall, chooseth rather to fall with it than to forsake it? And shall nature do this in trees, and shall not reason, shall not virtue, do it much more in men? or shall trees be reckoned the reasonable creatures, and men be cashiered out of the number? But this is the world: they are called lovers and friends of their faces no otherwise than baboons may be called men, for when a day of trial comes they are often found as far from friendship and true love as baboons from reason and true understanding. And such were my lovers and friends (always excepting Jonathan³); but I looked for better at my kinsmen's hands, for there is in them a propinquity of

¹ Matt. xxvi. 56: "Then all the disciples forsook him and fled."

² Matt. x. 24, 25. ³ 1 Sam. xviii. 1: "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him with his own soul."

nature, and nature will hardly be kept from working ; yet such is my unfortunateness, that in my behalf even nature herself grows idle, and I find as little comfort from my kinsmen as from my other lovers and friends ; and to say truly, rather less, for where my lovers and friends stand but aloof, my kinsmen stand afar off ; neither of them near, indeed, but yet my kinsmen the farthest off. My lovers and friends stand but aloof from my sore, as taking it perhaps for a *noli me tangere* [touch me not] ; but my kinsmen stand afar off, as taking it for no less than the very plague. My lovers and friends stand aloof from my sore, as expecting perhaps a time of recovery when they may come on again : but my kinsmen stand afar off, as never intending to hearken more after me. My lovers and friends stand aloof from my sore, as fearing more my sore than me ; but my kinsmen stand afar off, as fearing me no less than my sore ; and where my lovers and friends by standing aloof do but violate the law of a contracted friendship, my kinsmen by standing afar off violate even the law of natural affection. And is not this a grievous thing, that the law of reason, the law of friendship, the law of nature shall all be broken, rather than I shall be relieved, or find assistance ? And now, O my soul, seeing thy lovers and friends and kinsmen prove all unloyal, unfaithful, and unnatural, in whom, alas, canst thou hope for help ?—in whom, O Lord, but only in thee ? for thou art a lover incomparably more loyal than either the vine to the elm, or the elm to the vine. Thou art a friend infinitely more faithful than either Jonathan to David, or David to Jonathan. Thou art a kinsman, but rather a father, unspeakably more tender of thy children than either Boaz of Ruth,¹ or Abraham of his one and only son Isaac.²

But though to be thus forsaken, rejected, and even abhorred by lovers, and friends, and kinsmen be misery enough, and more than enough, for one man to bear, yet this is not all the misery I bear ; but *they also that seek after my life lay snares for me, and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceit[s] all the day long*

¹ Ruth ii. 8, etc.² Gen. xxii. 2.

[ver. 12]. It is not enough that my friends and kinsmen will do me no good, but there are others that will do me hurt; and it is not enough that they wish my hurt, but they seek to do it—they hunt after me¹ as after a prey. And it is no small hurt they seek to do me; but they lay snares for my life: nothing but my life will serve them. And they do it not so much by open violence, which might perhaps be withstood, but they do it by fraud and deceit, which is not easy to be avoided; for, first, they speak mischievous things, they raise scandals, and work the world to an ill opinion of me, and then they lie devising of ways how to entrap me; and they spend not an hour or two about it, but they imagine deceit all the day long. And, alas, O Lord, is this a world to have safety in scandals, where, if some be ready to devise them, others are as ready to believe them? If there be a Jezebel to plot a false accusation, are there not elders to put it in execution?² and do I not in this still run in the same line with my Lord Christ Jesus? for did not the Scribes and Pharisees first devise mischievous things against him,³ and then the high-priests and rulers believe what they devised, and execute what they believed?⁴ And what, O Lord, do I all this while? Do I stand upon my guard, and have an eye to their practices? Do I seek to repel their violence by force, or to frustrate their fraud with circumspection? Do I clear their scandals with apologies, or do I answer their clamours with vociferations? God knows, none of all these. I neither use arms offensive nor defensive; all my doing is suffering, and all the apology I make for myself is silence; for *as a deaf man I heard not, and as a dumb man I opened not my mouth*⁵ [ver. 13]. For why should I hear when I meant not to speak, and why should I speak when I knew beforehand I should not be heard? I knew by contesting I should but provoke them, and make them more guilty that were guilty

¹ 1 Sam. xxiv. 11: "Thou (Saul) huntest my soul to take it." ² 1 Kings xxi. 8, etc. ³ Luke vi. 7: "The scribes and Pharisees watched him . . . that they might find an accusation against him." ⁴ Luke xxiv. 20: "The chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him." ⁵ Ps. xxxviii. 13: "But I, as a deaf man, heard not: and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth."

too much before. I therefore thought it better myself to be silent than to set them a-roaring, and make them grow outrageous. No doubt, a great wisdom in David to know that to be deaf and dumb was in this case his best course; but yet a far greater virtue that, knowing it, he was able to do it. O how happy should we be if we could always do that which we know is best to be done;¹ and if our wills were as ready to act as our reason is able to enact, we should then decline² many rocks we now run upon; we should then avoid many errors we now run into. To be deaf and dumb are, indeed, great inabilities and defects when they be natural; but when they be voluntary, and I may say artificial, they are then great abilities, or rather perfections. They are two stems upon which do grow the excellent virtues of patience and charity, which, though David showed in himself in a great measure at the railing of Shimei,³ yet he could never so properly speak them of himself as in the person of Christ, for of him, indeed, the sacred story relates, that being railed upon and reviled,⁴ buffeted and beaten by the base multitude,⁵ yet, as a sheep led to the slaughter, he opened not his mouth, but was deaf and dumb even to death.⁶

O grievous alteration! transcendent indignity! He that restored cripples to health, and raised the dead to life, now to be deprived himself of the chief faculties of life, both active and passive! He that made the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak, now himself neither to speak nor hear! A grievous case, no doubt, to be so; and yet, no doubt, a just cause it should be so; for if he had heard, he should have heard but blasphemies; and if he had spoken, he must have spoken but reproofs⁷ [ver. 14]. And seeing blasphemies were too profane for his sacred ears to hear, and reproofs too harsh for his mild tongue to utter, what marvel if he that made the ear did himself not hear? what marvel if he that was the Word itself did not speak a word?

And as my deafness and dumbness have not proceeded

¹ John xiii. 17. ² Turn aside from. ³ 2 Sam. xvi. 7-12. ⁴ 1 Peter ii. 23.
⁵ Luke xxiii. 62-65. ⁶ Isa. liii. 7. ⁷ Ps. xxxviii. 14: "Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs."

from imbecility, but from patience, so neither have they proceeded from fear, but from reverence; for why should I speak when my hope is in thee, O God, that thou wilt speak? why should I hear when thou wilt hear for me?¹ [ver. 15.] For alas, O Lord, when I hear, they speak what they list, as either thinking I cannot control them, or not caring whether I can or no; but when thou hearest, they are glad to take heed what they say; for thou hast scales to weigh their words, and, if [thou] find them light, power to censure them. Why then should I offer to hear or speak, when I know ere long I shall have a hearing before thee, where thou shalt be their judge, and wilt be my advocate? And have I not reason till then to consecrate my ears and tongue to thee? It is true, injurious language is a provocation able to make a dumb man to speak, and I may say able to loosen the tongue of Croesus's dumb son; but he that so provoked should fall a-speaking² were very like to fall in speaking, for it is a slippery argument to be spoken in; and if in speaking I should slip never so little, oh what a joy it would be to my enemies! they would never desire better sport, they would magnify themselves against me³ [ver. 16]: I should be their blind Samson to make them merry,⁴ I should serve them for a stock of derision. Oh, therefore, suffer me not, O God, to suffer these indignities; but do thou hear for me, do thou speak for me; *for I, alas, am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me* [ver. 17], that if my slipping and falling be a cause to make mine enemies rejoice, they may be sure of joy enough; for how can I choose but often fall, that am of myself so ready to halt, and specially when my sorrow is always before me, that makes me I cannot see my way before me; for what doth more blind the eyes and take away the sight than sorrow? Was it not sorrow that hindered Mary Magdalene from discerning Christ when she saw him at the sepulchre?⁵ And, besides, my halting is the worst kind of

¹ Ps. xxxviii. 15: "For in thee, O LORD, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God." ² The son of Croesus, long dumb, is said to have been so moved by seeing an attempt to assassinate his father, as to call out, "Man! kill not Croesus," and, thus, by securing assistance, to save his parent's life (Herod i. 86). ³ Ps. xxxviii. 16: "For I said, *Hear me, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me*; when my foot slippeth they magnify themselves against me." ⁴ Judg. xvi. 25. ⁵ John xx. 14, 15.

halting that is, for I come not to it, as Jacob came to his, by wrestling with an angel, which brought a blessing with it; but I come to it as Mephibosheth¹ did, by the imbecility or inequality of my parts: for having two feet to go upon, my reason and my will, how can I choose but halt when my will is so much longer than my reason? And then, if to the aptness of my falling by reason of my halting, there be added the inadvertency of the way by reason of my sorrow, how can I choose but even trip at every step I take?—that if mine enemies rejoice at my fallings, they are very like to have their fill of rejoicing; for if a just man fall seven times a day, how often, alas, am I like to fall that halt, I may rightly say, downright in sin? But let mine enemies rejoice to see me fall as much as they please, this shall not hinder me from seeking to rise; and seeing there is no rising from sin but by confessing it, *I will therefore declare mine iniquity, I will be sorry for my sin* [ver. 18]. I will declare mine iniquity, that my enemies may see I can speak to God though I was dumb to them; and I will be sorry for my sin, to make them see how little I envy their rejoicing that can take pleasure in my own sorrowing; for to declare mine iniquities without sorrowing for my sin might rather be thought an ostentation than a penitence, and rather show me proud of my sin than ashamed of it. I will therefore be sorry for my sin, that my sorrow may testify for me that my declaration now is out of contrition, as my declaration shall testify that my dumbness before was out of compassion. But though I scorn mine enemies' deriding, yet I am not insensible of mine own disgrace, and therefore hope that my speaking now shall supply my dumbness before, and make thee, O God, to take my cause into thine own hearing, and either convert mine enemies or else confound them. This, indeed, is my hope, though I see as yet but small fruit of my hope; *for mine enemies are lively and [they are] strong, and they that hate me without a cause² are multiplied* [ver. 19]. I looked

¹ 2 Sam. iv. 4: "And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame of his feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreei, and his nurse took him up and fled; and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth." ² Ps. xxxviii. 19: "Wrongfully." (A.V.)

for abatement of their rejoicing, and they continue lively still for abatement of their power, and they continue as strong as ever for abatement of their number, and they are rather multiplied and increase. But though it be an easy matter for them to be lively, being so strong as they are, and to be strong being so many as they are, yet how easy is it for thee, O God, by thy spirit of life to strike a dump¹ into their liveliness, by thy almightiness to suppress their strength, by thy infiniteness to confound their number; and why, then, should I be afraid what mine enemies can do unto me?² Why should I be frightened with an arm of flesh?³ But that which is most strange of all, they hate me without a cause⁴ [ver. 20]; as if one should say, Their hatred to me is miraculous; an effect without a cause; for what cause of hatred where such motives of love?⁵ I seek to do them good, I follow the thing that is good, and yet they hate me. And yet this is no wonder, for is it not said, *Qui male agit, odit lucem* (They that do evil hate the light)? and if hate the light, how can they choose but hate the children of light? That it appears to be cause enough to the wicked to hate the godly, if they discern in them but any sparks of godliness; and then if this be the case, that I must either be wicked myself or else be hated of the wicked, I shall never stand long in making my choice, seeing I shall never certainly buy their love so dear. But since they are generations of vipers, and render me evil for good, at least, O Lord, do not thou forsake me; be not thou far from me⁶ [ver. 21]; for as long as thou art on my side, and stayest by me, what though the waters roar, and the mountains shake with the swelling thereof?⁷ What though the bulls of Bashan compass me, and the strong bulls be set me round,⁸ seeing thou art able to deliver me from their fury, and from the hands of all that hate me?

But, O my soul, thou mayest call long enough to God

¹ A heavy sadness. ² Ps. lvi. 11: "I will not be afraid what man can do unto me." ³ 2 Chron. xxxii. 8: "With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles." ⁴ Ps. xxxv. 19. ⁵ Ps. xxxviii. 20: "They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries: because I follow the thing that good is." ⁶ Ps. xxxviii. 21: "Forsake me not, O LORD: O my God, be not far from me." ⁷ Ps. xlii. 3. ⁸ Ps. xxii. 12: "Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round."

not to be far from thee, and all in vain if thou be far from him. Take heed, therefore, it be not found in thee which he sometimes said, This people draweth near me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me;¹ for if thou be near him only with thy lips, such nearness will do thee small good. It is not the neighbourhood of lips that he cares for, but if thou wilt have him not to be far from thee, thou must be careful that thy heart be not far from him. And yet neither is this enough, O God, that thou be not far from me, if thou stand but only looking on, and makest not haste to help me.² Thy slowness may be as prejudicial to me as thy being far off; for, alas, mine enemies are ready to devour me,³ and they that seek after my soul make haste. Do thou, therefore, O God, make haste also, and be not slower than mine enemies; neither let thy love be outrun by their hatred. But, O my soul, why shouldst thou require God to make such haste, as though thou wouldst, as it were, surprise him on a sudden? Alas, is God like man, that he should stand in need of time to consider? Are there *secunda cogitationes* [second thoughts] with him, as there are with men? Is there anything that can be sudden or unlooked-for to him? Although, therefore, he be slow to anger,⁴ yet he is never slow to mercy; but for showing of mercy he hath the wings of a dove, and rides upon the wind.⁵ And seeing, O God, thou art able, and canst do it, O show thyself willing also, and be forward to do it; make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation. Make haste to help me, that thou mayest be Lord of my salvation, lest I fall into mine enemies' hands that would be lords of my destruction; or, rather, make haste to help me, O Lord, thou that art my salvation; for until thou come, I am, alas, a servant of sin, and a bond-slave to Satan, that would be my destruction.

¹ Isa. xxix. 13: "Forasmuch as this people draw near *me* with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me." ² Ps. xxxviii. 22: "Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation." ³ Ps. lvi. 2: "Mine enemies would daily swallow *me* up." ⁴ Neh. ix. 17. ⁵ Ps. xviii. 10.

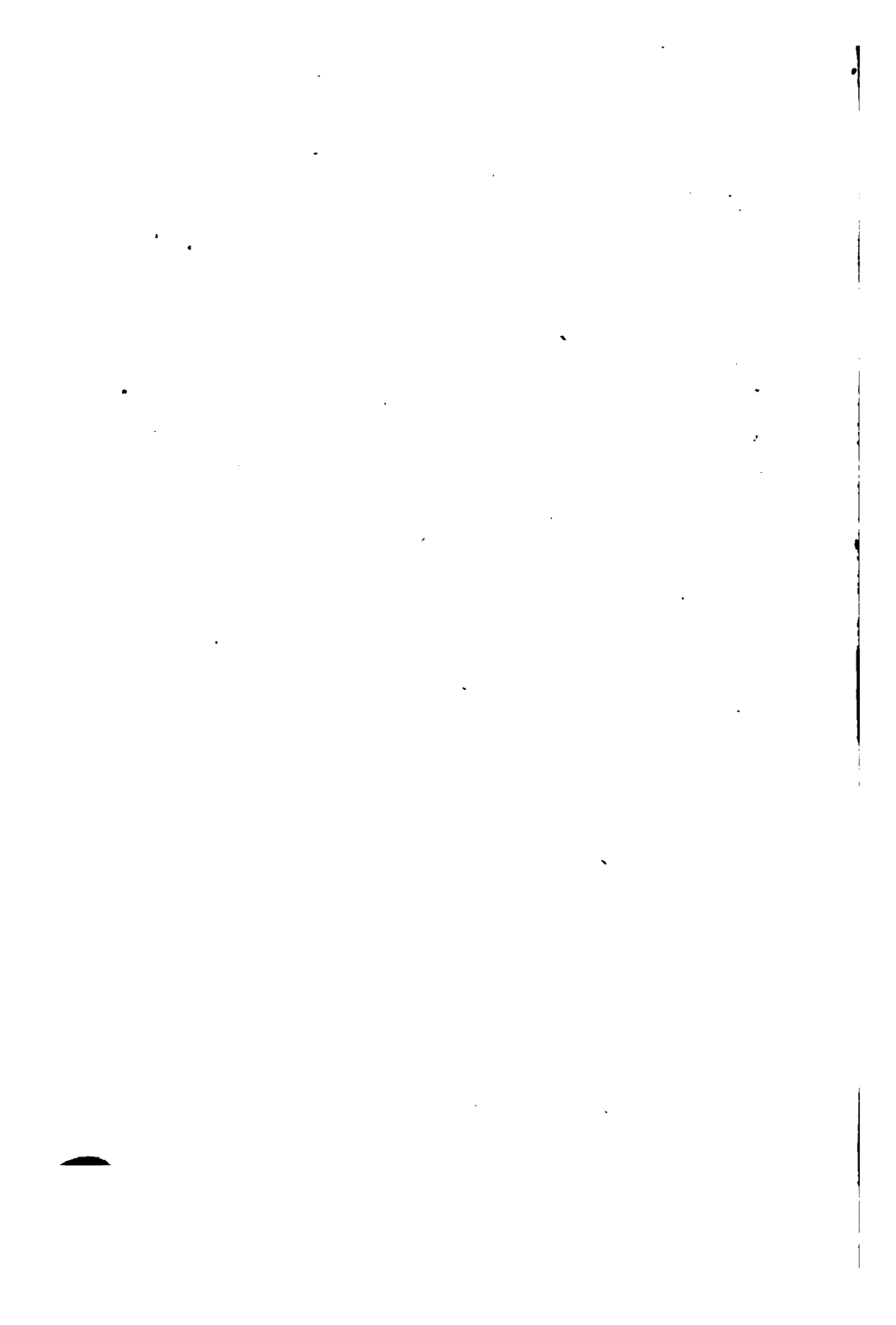
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To the
RIGHT HONOURABLE
EDWARD, EARL OF DORSET,

OF HIS MAJESTY'S MOST HONOURABLE PRIVY COUNCIL,
LORD CHAMBERLAIN TO THE QUEEN, AND
KNIGHT OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER.

MOST HONOURED LORD,—I know you neither like nor have leisure to look upon trifles, but I know also you account not discourses of piety in the number of trifles. This makes me bold to present your Lordship with this short treatise of Meditations; that, being short, it may not divert you long; being pious, not divert you at all. I so much honour your Lordship for your public virtues, so much am bound to you for your private, that I cannot forbear to present you with something as a testimony of my service in both; and a richer present I could not think of than meditations upon this psalm of David, which is indeed the masterpiece of his repentance, as his repentance the masterpiece of all his virtues. The jewel itself is from David, only the case from me; and though the jewel deserve a more illustrious case, and your person a more illustrious present, yet there is colour to hope I may be pardoned in both, seeing the jewel's splendour gives a lustre to any case, and your nobleness to any present. And though it might be presented with a better hand, yet it cannot with a better heart, seeing he presents it that is

Your Lordship's humble and devoted servant,

RICHARD BAKER.

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness : according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. 2. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. 3. For I acknowledge my transgressions : and my sin *is* ever before me. 4. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in thy sight : that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *and* be clear when thou judgest. 5. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity ; and in sin did my mother conceive me. 6. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts : and in the hidden *part* thou shalt make me to know wisdom. 7. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean : wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8. Make me to hear joy and gladness ; *that* the bones *which* thou hast broken may rejoice. 9. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. 10. Create in me a clean heart, O God ; and renew a right spirit within me. 11. Cast me not away from thy presence ; and take not thy holy Spirit from me. 12. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation ; and uphold me *with thy* free Spirit. 13. *Then* will I teach transgressors thy ways ; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. 14. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation : *and* my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. 15. O LORD, open thou my lips ; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. 16. For thou desirest not sacrifice ; else would I give *it* : thou delightest not in burnt offering. 17. The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit : a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. 18. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion : build thou the walls of Jerusalem. 19. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering : then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.—PSALM II. (Auth. Vers.)

MEDITATIONS AND DISQUISITIONS

UPON THE

FIFTY-FIRST PSALM OF DAVID.

O LORD our God, how excellent is thy name in all the world !¹ Thy glorious majesty is excellent, but that brings nothing to me ; thy justice is excellent, but that brings me to nothing ; it is thy mercy that must do me good ;² and therefore thy other excellences I adore, but this I invoke. To invoke thy justice I dare not ; thy glory, I cannot ; but thy mercy, I both dare and can. For why should I not dare, when fear gives me boldness ? How should I not be able, when weakness gives me strength ? Why should I not dare, when thou invitest me to it ? How should I not be able, when thou drawest me to it ? Dost thou invite me, and shall I not come ? Dost thou draw me, and shall I draw back ? Can there be a patron so powerful as thou ? Can there be a suppliant so dejected as myself ? Of whom, then, is it fitter to ask for mercy than of thee, O God, who art the God of mercy ? and for whom is it fitter to ask for mercy than for me who am a creature of misery ? If I were not so miserable, thou couldst not be to me so merciful ; and have I not reason, then, to ask that of thee which thou couldst not have so much occasion to manifest to me as by me ? If it were not for sin, there should be no misery ; and if no misery, no exercise for thy mercy ; and wilt thou let it stand idle where it hath so

¹ Ps. viii. 1 : "O LORD our Lord, how excellent *is* thy name in all the earth."
² Ps. li. 1 : "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness : according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions."

foul sins for so fair fields to walk in? Hast thou mercy, and wilt thou not show it? or wilt thou show it to others and not to me? To say I have deserved it were to make it no mercy, for if I deserved it, it were justice, and not mercy. Is not thy mercy over all thy works?¹ and am not I the work of thy hands? The more mercy thou showest, the more is thine honour; and wilt thou not do that which is most for thine honour? Thou didst show mercy to Adam, who was the first sinner; and thou didst show mercy to the thief on the cross, who was the longest sinner; and wilt thou not show mercy to me, who am not the first, and hope not to be the longest? Hast thou showed mercy to so many that thou hast not mercy left for me also? If thy mercy were finite, and could be exhausted, it were no charity to ask it, lest others might want it; but seeing it is infinite, and can never be spent, why should I be sparing to ask it, or thou to bestow it? Thy mercy is infinite, or none at all, for all thou art is infinite; and wilt thou by showing thy mercy less, show thyself to be merciless? If thy mercy be infinite, it must extend to all; and how extends it to all if not to me? Thou hast as much mercy for me as if thou hadst none to have mercy on but me; and can it be thou shouldst have so much for me, and let me have none of it? Can my daily infirmities alien thy love? This were to think thou didst not love me but for my goodness; and, alas, what goodness is there? What goodness ever was there in me that thou shouldst love me? Can thy love aliened² turn away thy mercy? This were to think thy mercy did reach no further than thy love; and so, because I know thou lovest not sin, I might justly fear thou wouldst never have mercy upon sinners. But, O gracious God, thou lovest for thy love's sake, and thou hast mercy for thy mercy's sake; and seeing thy love, which is thyself, can never leave thee, it makes me assured thy mercy, which is thy nature, will never leave me. If I refused thy mercy, thou mightst justly withhold it; but now, behold, I hold my breast open to receive it; or if I did not ask thy mercy, thou mightst forbear to show it; but now,

¹ Ps. cxlv. 9: "His tender mercies *are* over all his works."

² Alienated.

behold, I beg it upon my knees. I am none of Zebedee's sons, that ask to sit at thy right hand and at thy left ;¹ I desire not exaltation, but absolution ; it is not thy bounty I ask, but only thy mercy : Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness, and according to the multitude of thy tender mercies do away mine offences.

It may be thought severity in God to cast Adam out of Paradise for only one sin ; but was Adam's sin but only one ?—but one, perhaps, in action, but a million in affection. For say it was pride—hath not pride more branches than a tree hath ? Say it was gluttony—hath not gluttony more dishes than Dives² had ? Say it was curiosity—hath not curiosity more eyes than Argus had ? Say it was disobedience—hath not disobedience more faults than Absalom had ?³ For how else could Manasseh's sins come to be more than the sands of the sea, if it be not that a sin, though but in thought, may justly be thought a million of sins ? And as it is said in the Gospel that a man was possessed with an unclean spirit, but that unclean spirit was a legion,⁴ so we may say of every sin it is but one sin, but that one sin is a legion. Here, therefore, O my soul, take heed thou mistake not thyself in casting up the audit of thy sins, and think thou hast perhaps but one or two sins to answer for to God, when in God's sight every sin thou committest is a legion ; and for a legion of sins thou must make thy account—thou shalt make account. And now, seeing my sins are in number so many, and so great in measure, have I not reason to ask for mercies of equal proportion ? Although, therefore, I ask not thy bounty, but thy mercy, yet the bounty of thy mercy I ask : to ask less than would serve, would prejudice my wants, and not relieve them ; and how then can I ask less than a multitude of great mercies, to do away my offences, who have a multitude of great⁵ offences to be done away ?

But hath God then a multitude of mercies, whereof some be greater, and some be lesser ? Is not his mercy, as himself is, only one and *simplicissimus* ? No doubt, it is so in itself ; one and single as himself, but yet in relation to us,

¹ Matt. xx. 21.² Luke xvi. 19.³ 2 Sam. xiii., *seqq.*⁴ Mark v. 9.⁵ Ps. xxv. 11 : "Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great."

and to our understanding, it is said to be as it is applied ; to every sin a mercy, to great sins great mercies, to a multitude of sins a multitude of mercies.

But is not this a disorder in praying, to pray for that for which we should rather give thanks? to pray for a multitude of great mercies, as though we had them not already, when we should rather give thanks for them which we have so continually? for is it not God's great mercy to us all that we be not all consumed?¹ and this great mercy multiplied unto us, when thousands fall on our right hand, and ten thousands on our left, yet we in the midst of these dangers are kept safe from danger?² Is it not his great mercy that he gives riches and plenty, and this mercy multiplied unto us, when so many are pined away with penury, yet our land floweth with milk and honey?³ Is it not his great mercy that the light of the Gospel shines upon us, and this mercy multiplied unto us, when so many live in darkness, and in the shadow of death?⁴ These indeed are great mercies ; yet they are but the mercies of his patience, or of his general goodness and bounty ; and of these mercies we may justly be afraid, as it is said, There is mercy with thee, that thou mayest be feared ;⁵ but it is the mercies of his special love that I desire ; and of these mercies there can be no fear ; for love casteth out fear.⁶ The mercies of his patience, and of his bounty, are not his tender mercies ; we may have them, perhaps, and to our hurt, as long life ; but to heap up wrath against the day of wrath : riches and honours but to make our camel the greater, and the unfitter to pass through a needle's eye ;⁷ the light of the Gospel, but to make us the more guilty, and subject to be beaten with more stripes ;⁸ but his tender mercies are the mercies of his love, and can never be had but for our good ; for love covers the multitude of sins ;⁹ and this covering of our sins is the recovering again of Paradise, and suffers not the angel with the flaming sword to find

¹ Lam. iii. 22. ² Ps. xci. 7 : "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand ; but it shall not come nigh thee." ³ Exod. iii. 8, 17, *et alibi*.
⁴ Isa. ix. 2. ⁵ Ps. cxxx. 4 : "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." ⁶ 1 John iv. 18 : "Perfect love casteth out fear." ⁷ Matt. xix. 24.
⁸ Luke xii. 47, 48. ⁹ 1 Pet. iv. 8 : "Charity shall cover the multitude of sins."

anything in us, to keep us out.¹ Oh, therefore, however it pleaseth thee, O God, to deal with me, in the mercies of thy patience, by length of days, or in the mercies of thy bounty, by riches and honours, be pleased at least to grant me the mercies of thy love to cover my sins, and according to the multitude of thy tender mercies do away mine offences. It was a great mercy, even of thy love, that with great miracles thou didst bring the Israelites out of Egypt;² but that thou didst endure to be grieved with that generation forty years together, and yet bring them at last into the land of Canaan,³ this was a multitude of great mercies. And yet more than this, it was a great mercy that thou didst suffer our first parents, after their great sin, to live, and to propagate their sinful race; but that thou didst send thine only Son to expiate their sin, and to make satisfaction for it, with infinite indignities, in life and death—this was a multitude of great and tender mercies. And now that I have the multitude of God's tender mercies at the height, what would I have to do? Even to do away mine offences, for this is a work for a multitude of mercies, and of mercy only. Thy power, O God, is almighty, and yet cannot; thy justice most perfect, and yet will not; thy wisdom infinite, and yet knows not how to do away offences without thy mercy; but thy mercy alone, and of itself, both can, and may, and will; and therefore thy mercy is the sanctuary that I fly unto; and seeing thou delightest in showing of mercy,⁴ Behold, I show thee a large field here, wherein thou mayest show it—a multitude of my great sins for a multitude of thy great mercies. And because sins are pollutions, and no way to do away pollutions so well as by washing, therefore *wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sins* [sin]. [ver. 2.]

I must confess I was at first afraid of thy washing, for thou didst once wash the whole world, and then thou didst wash away the sinners, but not the sins; and if thou shouldst

¹ Gen. iii. 24: "Cherubims . . . to keep the way of the tree of life." * Exod. xx. 2. ² Heb. iii. 9-11: "When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart, and they have not known my ways. So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest." * Micah vii. 18.

wash me so, it were as good for me to be unwashed ; but I consider that washing was in thy justice ; the washing I desire is in thy mercy ; and I should not have dared to pray thee to wash me, if I had not prayed thee first to have mercy upon me, for it is thy washing in mercy only that washes clean ; thy washing in justice, washeth clean away.

But why is David so preposterous¹ in making his suit,—to pray God to wash away his sins, before he makes his confession, and tells what his sins be?—as a man that should require his physician to cure his disease without telling what he ails, and what his disease is. But is it not that the ardour and burning heat which David felt of his sins, made him, as it were, to leap into the water at the very first, crying out to be washed, quite forgetting all order, through the violence of his ardour ; much like to St. Peter, who through heat of desire to be instantly with Christ, whom he saw upon the water, never stayed, but girt his coat about him, and leapt into the water, clothes and all.² Or is it that David might well require to be cured of his disease without telling it, being come to a Physician who knew his disease better than himself? Or is it, indeed, that to tell our disease is part of our curing ; to confess our sins, is an act of our washing, and therefore no preposterous course in David to pray for washing before confessing, seeing no confessing is truly found which hath not its beginning, and is not proceeding from God's washing?

But how can we answer this to God? He saith unto us by Isaiah, Wash you, make you clean ;³ meaning, it seems, we should wash ourselves ; and now we come to him to wash us, as though we should say, If you will have us be washed, you must come and do it yourself. Indeed, both must be done: God must wash us, and we must wash ourselves. But God's washing is not like our washing: God's washing is by the fire of his Spirit, our washing is by the water of contrition ; God's washing is by pardoning, our washing by repenting. Peter washed himself when, having denied his

¹ Preposterous, having the wrong end forward, topsy-turvy, unnatural (Bailey's Dict.) ² John xxi. 7. ³ Isa. i. 16.

Master, he went out and wept bitterly.¹ Christ washed him when he prayed for him that his faith might not fail.² David washed himself when, for grief of his sins, he watered his bed with tears ;³ God washed him when he sent him word by the prophet Nathan that his sin was forgiven.⁴ And, indeed, if God wash us not with his water of pardon, the water of our own tears will do no great good. It may wet, but not wash, or wash, but not cleanse, if God put not our tears into his bottle,⁵ which only can give them the power of cleansing. For Esau had a flood of tears to wash himself withal, but God never put them into his bottle ; they were tears for his punishment, but not for his sins ;⁶ and, therefore, they might wet perhaps, but they never cleansed. Oh, then, put my tears into thy bottle, O God, for they are tears for my sins, and not for my punishment ; and then wash me with them, and I shall be clean.⁷ My tears, God knows, are of themselves too cold, unless they be warmed by the fire of God's Spirit ; but if we bring the water, and God bring the fire, then, indeed, a fit lexative⁸ will be made to make us clean. Oh, then, warm the cold tears of my repentance with the fire of thy Spirit, O God, and then wash me with them, that my repentance itself, being first cleansed, may be made effectual to cleanse me from my sin. Our own washing is of itself imperfect, and makes us never a whit the cleaner, because we mistake the water, as Pilate did, who washed his hands from Christ's blood⁹ where he should have washed them in Christ's blood ; but thy washing, O God, is never without cleansing ; for thou canst not mistake the water, who art the water thyself ; and not in a cistern, but the fountain itself.¹⁰ We wash ourselves, commonly, but as the Pharisees wash their cups, only the outside ;¹¹ and this makes us but hypocrites. But thy washing, O God, is always inward, for thou searchest the hearts and reins ;¹² and this is the washing that makes the

¹ Matt. xxvi. 75. ² Luke xxii. 32. ³ Ps. vi. 6. ⁴ 2 Sam. xii. 13 : "And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord hath also put away thy sin." ⁵ Ps. lvi. 8. ⁶ Heb. xii. 17 : "He found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." Cf. Ps. li. 7. ⁷ *Sic* in text. The meaning is clear. ⁸ Matt. xxvii. 34. ⁹ Jer. ii. 13. ¹⁰ Matt. xxiii. 25. ¹¹ Ps. vii. 9 : "The righteous God trieth the heart and reins."

true Israelite, in whom there is no guile.¹ When Naaman was cured of his leprosy by washing in Jordan,² did God then wash him, or did Naaman wash himself? Indeed both : Naaman washed himself by obedience and confidence in God's power ; God washed him by giving power to the water and confidence to Naaman. But this power was but a personal estate to Jordan ; it hath no such power in cleansing of me. The water that must cleanse me is the water that flowed out of my Saviour's side ; and in confidence of the power of that water, I humbly prostrate myself before thee, O God, and say, Wash me thoroughly from my iniquities, and cleanse me from my sins.

But why should David speak so superfluously—use two words when one would serve? for if we be cleansed, what matter is it whether it be by washing or no? Yet David had great reason for using both words, for he requires not that God would cleanse him by miracle, but by the ordinary way of cleansing, and this was washing ; he names, therefore, washing as the means, and cleansing as the end ; he names washing as the work a-doing, and cleansing as the work done ; he names washing as considering the agent, and cleansing as applying it to the patient ; and, indeed, as in the figure of the law there was not, so in the verity of the gospel there is not, any ordinary means of cleansing but only by washing ; and therefore out of Christ our Saviour's side there flowed water and blood,—water to wash us, and blood to cleanse us ; water to make the laver of our regeneration in baptism, and blood to make the laver of our expiation in Christ's sacrifice. But though the words seem here to be thus distinguished, yet elsewhere³ they are oftentimes promiscuously used, and as well cleansing as washing referred to this water, as well washing as cleansing referred to this blood.

But what means David to say, Wash me from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin, as though he would be washed from one thing and cleansed from another, and not be cleansed from that for which he is washed? But

¹ John i. 47.² 2 Kings v. 14.³ Elsewhere.

is it not that iniquity and sin, though called by divers names, are both the same thing, but called iniquity, as being a transgression of the law,—called sin, as being an offence against God? Or is it that in sin there is both a stain and a guilt, and he prays to be washed from the stain and cleansed from the guilt? Or is it indeed that he useth divers words to show that he asks forgiveness for all his sins, by what name or title soever they be called?

But is not this an indignity to the great majesty of God? We put our meanest servants to wash our clothes, and will we put God to so mean an office, to be a launderer¹ of sins? Yet see the humility of majesty, a humility even to ecstasy; he descends yet lower, not only to wash our sins, but to take our sins upon him. It seems St. Peter, indeed, was in this error, to think it an indignity, and therefore would not by any means suffer that Christ should wash him until he heard Christ say, Unless I wash thee, thou canst have no part in me; and then he cried, Not my feet only, but my hands and my head; and is not this my case also, that unless God wash me I can have no part in him?² And will I lose my part in God for want of washing? Oh, therefore, my soul, prepare thyself for this washing; put off thy clothes, and strip thyself stark naked; keep not so much as fig-leaves about thee,³ either to hide thy sins by contumacy, or to cover them by hypocrisy, or to slight them by indulgency; but lay them all open and bare before the face of God, that whilst nothing is interposed between God's water and thy sins, it may without impediment have full liberty to work upon thee.

But what though God do wash us, are we sure his washing will always cleanse us? Why is it, then, that he saith, I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged;⁴ for may he not as well say, I have washed thee, and thou wast not cleansed? and if not cleansed, as good not washed. Oh, therefore, not wash me only, but cleanse me from my sins, that as in washing thou showest thy love, so by cleansing thou mayest show thy power, seeing it is an office which as none will be willing to undertake but he whose love is

¹ Masc. form of *lauress*. ² John xiii. 6—8. ³ Gen. iii. 7. ⁴ Ezek. xxiv. 13

unspeakable, so none can be able to discharge but he whose power is ineffable. For can washing be without touching? and would any man foul his fingers to touch so foul a thing as my sin, if he did not love exceedingly? Can cleansing me be without doing a miracle? For seeing it cannot more truly be said that I have sin than that I am sin, what is it now to cleanse me but even *laterem lavare* [to wash a brick¹], which was never counted less than either a labour lost or a miracle wrought; and can any do miracles but he whose power is unlimited? Oh, then, wash me from mine iniquity, that I may praise thee for thy love; and cleanse me from my sin, that I may magnify thee for thy power, which, as I shall do both if once I be cleansed, so I am able to do neither until I be washed. For, alas, O Lord, what am I but as a filthy rag² before thee? Who am I but the man by the highway side, lying bound and wounded?³ no means at all left me to wash, much less to cleanse, myself. They must be both thine own, thine only work, O God, both to wash me by thy preventing grace, and by thy assisting grace to cleanse me. Oh, then, cleanse me from my sins, O God; let not the foulness of my sins make thee unwilling to wash me; let not the reluctance of my flesh make thee unable to cleanse me, but make thy work of washing me to prosper in thy hand. Oh, wash me, but not as Simon Magus was washed,⁴ who came fouler out of the water⁵ than he went in; but as the eunuch was washed, who came so clean out of the water that he was ready to run through fire and water for thy name's sake,⁶ and by his washing was made a fit minister for the washing of others.⁷ And now, O great God, since it hath pleased thee to descend to so low a work as washing me, O wash me thoroughly; not rinse me only, as though I were but lightly stained, and had but some small spots upon me, but wash me thoroughly, as having a leprosy that overspreads me,⁸ a foulness that is deeply engrained in me—so deeply, O God, that nothing but a washing by thine own hand can fetch it out.

¹ A Latin proverbial phrase expressive of "labour lost." ² Isa. lxiv. 6: "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." ³ Luke x. 30: "A certain *man* . . . fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead." ⁴ Acts viii. 13. ⁵ Acts viii. 18—23. ⁶ Acts viii. 38, 39: ". . . and he went on his way rejoicing." ⁷ Tradition ascribes to this eunuch the founding of the church in Ethiopia. ⁸ Lev. xiv. 8, 9.

And yet, stay,—why should I put God to this trouble of washing me at all, seeing I have an easier way of cleansing taught me by the centurion in the Gospel, Speak the word only, and I shall be clean?¹ or, if this be still too much, an easier way yet taught me by another, *Si vis, potes me mundare*, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean?² O gracious God, whether it be by washing, or by speaking the word, or by thy will only to have it so, whatsoever be the means, let this at least be the effect, that though I be not made bright, which is more than I can be, yet I may be made clean, which is no more than I must be; for I am not of the Pharisee's mind, to think myself clean enough already; but I know mine iniquity, and my sin is ever before me³ [ver. 3]; although, perhaps, it be a knowledge I were better be without; for Christ knew no sin,⁴ which we may be sure he should have done if it had been worth the knowing. Christ, indeed, knew no sin in himself, but he knew sin in itself; he knew no sin by committing it, but he knew sin by understanding it. My misery is not that I know sin, but that I know my sin, that I have sin of mine own to know. Christ knew no sin, because he could not say I know my sin; but I know my sin because I cannot say I know not sin. And yet who will believe that a man knows sin that will be meddling with it? We say there are no miracles nowadays in the world; and can there be a greater wonder than this, that a man should know sin and yet commit it? should know the foulness of sin, and yet lie wallowing in it? should know the horror of sin, and yet run headlong into it? But is it not that we are all in this the children of Adam? Our eyes are not opened till we have eaten of the forbidden fruit;⁵ we know not sin truly till we have committed it; we see not the foulness till we feel the guiltiness; and this makes me say now, which I could not so well say till now, I know mine iniquities, and my sin is ever before me; for they were strangers to me before, and I knew not their conditions; but now I find what they are, and am sick

¹ Matt. viii. 8: "Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." ² Matt. viii. 2. ³ Ps. li. 3: "For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me." (A.V.) ⁴ 2 Cor. v. 21. ⁵ Gen. iii. 7.

of their company. They were, indeed, pleasing to me in the doing, but are now most loathsome being done. They stood behind me at first as servants waiting upon me; but are now ever before me as tormentors seizing upon me; that if ever I loved them before, I hate them now a thousand times more.

But why should David make it so great a matter to say, I know my sin, as though a man could commit a sin and not know it? as though Adam could eat of the forbidden fruit, and not know he had eaten it? Adam, indeed, knew his eating, yet he knew not his sinning; he knew his nakedness, but he knew not his guiltiness. If, when he answered God, I know my nakedness,¹ he had said, I know my sin, he might, perhaps, have tarried in Paradise still; that we may see how hard a thing it is to say, I know my sin, which cost Adam no less than Paradise before he could say it. And how much easier came David to be able to say, I know my sin; for do we think he could say it as soon as he had committed it? No, nor almost a whole year after,² that, as we may say of Adam, it cost him a great place, so we may say of David, it cost him a long time to learn to say, I know my sin.

But how can David say, I know my sins, and yet in another place say, Forgive me my secret sins?³ For if he knew them, how be they secret? and if they be secret, how doth he know them? Indeed, both David and every one of us hath sin enough to serve both turns; not only because sin is of a greater size in God's sight than it is in ours, and therefore leaves much for him to see which to us is secret, but because also there are many actions in our life which we so lightly pass over as if we thought them no sins—perhaps thought them virtues, when yet in God's sight they are grievous sins. David had committed a great sin, which he could not choose but know to be a sin, and therefore might justly say, I know my sin; but that his sin had caused God's name to be blasphemed,⁴ this was a sin he knew not

¹ Gen. iii. 10. ² 2 Sam. xi. 4, 27; xii. 13. ³ Ps. xix. 12: "Cleanse thou me from secret faults." ⁴ 2 Sam. xii. 14: "By this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme."

till God himself did tell him; and from hence he might justly suspect he had cause enough in other sins to say, Forgive me my secret sins. St. James saith, "In many things we offend all;"¹ this we all know, and [it] gives us all just cause to say, I know my sin; but what those many things are in which we offend, and what those offences be which in many things we commit, this many times we know not, and gives us as just cause to say, Forgive me my secret sins.

But alas, my soul, I must not stay here only to know my sin and keep it to myself, as though I thought it a jewel which none might know of for fear of losing it; but in this I acknowledge the great favour of God, that as I know my sin, so I acknowledge my sin; for far be it from me I should be found of Saul's disposition, to think to make God believe that I saved the fat of the sheep for sacrifice,² when I saved them for mine own profit: this hiding a sin is a greater sin than the sin it hides, for it is an affront to God's omniscieny. Adam's fig-leaves proved as hurtful to him as the forbidden fruit; for nothing lays our sins so open to God as our seeking to hide them; and although it be oftentimes dangerous to acknowledge a fault to a civil magistrate, who without our acknowledging could not know it, yet there can be no danger to acknowledge our sins to God, who knows them already, whether we acknowledge them or no. Our acknowledging them to him is not a discovery, but the first degree of recovery; and seeing I am now travelling to repentance, how is it possible I should ever come at it if I acknowledge not my sins, which is the first step to it? and therefore, howsoever I am guilty of many great and heinous sins, yet of this sin of hiding my sin thou canst clear me, O God; for I acknowledge mine iniquity, and my sin is ever before me.³

But yet what good will the knowing or the acknowledging my sin do me, if I let it slip from my heart as soon as it is off my tongue?—if, having once acknowledged it, I cast it behind me, and think no more of it? Behold, therefore, O God, I set it before me, and am always beholding it. It is

¹ James iii. 2. ² 1 Sam. xv. 15: "And Saul said . . . the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God." (cf. ver. 9.) ³ Ps. li. 3: "For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me." (A.V.)

ever before me in meditation, for I cannot but be thinking still how foolish I have been to procure thy displeasure, though it had been *regni causâ*, for the gaining of a kingdom; how much more to provoke thine anger for the pleasing only of some idle fancy? It is ever before me in remorse, for it is ever running¹ as a sore in my mind, that against thee only have I sinned, against whom only I should not have sinned; much like the fault of our first parents, who seem to have eaten of that fruit only of which fruit only they should not have eaten. It is ever before me in prospect; for, looking earnestly upon sin, I can see nothing in it that should make any man to love it. It is deformed and crooked, it is foul and ill-favoured, it is unsound and diseased, it is old and wrinkled; that I wonder at myself how I was ever gotten but once to embrace it; yet I see withal it paints and makes a fair show; it perfumes and makes a sweet smell; it is in profession an angel of light,² and carries apples in its hand, of the tree of good and evil, that would entice any man.³ It is ever before me in terror: waking, methinks I hear the Judge pronouncing sentence of condemnation against me; sleeping, I am frighted with dreams no less fearful. If a leaf do but wag, methinks it threatens me; if a bird do but chirp, it seems to accuse me. I am frighted with light, and jealous of darkness. For how can I choose but fear lest all thy creatures have set themselves against me, who have so unnaturally, so unloyally, so ungratefully set myself against thee? For against thee, against thee only have I sinned⁴ [ver. 4], not against heaven,⁵ not against earth, not against angels, not against men; for to these I never vowed allegiance, nor stand engaged; but against thee only; against thee, my Father, and so have sinned in disobedience; against thee, my sovereign Lord, and so have sinned in rebellion; against thee, my Benefactor, and so have sinned in ungratefulness; that whilst no grace hath

¹ Ps. lxxvii. 2: "My sore ran in the night and ceased not." ² 2 Cor. xi. 14: "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." ³ Gen. iii. 6: "The woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes," etc. ⁴ Ps. li. 4: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." (A.V.) ⁵ Yet in Luke xv. 21, "the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven," etc.

been found wanting in thee that might have kept me from sinning, no grace hath been found in me to keep me from sin.

But is there not matter here to make us at a stand? For to say, Against thee I have sinned, is most just and fit; but to say, Against thee only I have sinned, seems something hard. It had perhaps been a fit speech in the mouth of our first parent Adam; he might justly have said to God, Against thee only have I sinned, who never sinned against any other; but for us to say it, who commit sins daily against our neighbours, and specially for David to say it, who committed two notorious sins against his neighbour and faithful friend Uriah,¹ what unfitter speech could possibly be devised? But is it not that these actions of David were great wrongs indeed, and enormous iniquities against Uriah; but can we properly say they were sins against Uriah? For what is sin but a transgression of God's law?² And how then can sin be committed against any but against him only whose law we transgress? Or is it that it may justly be said, Against thee only have I sinned, because against others perhaps in a base tenure, yet only against God *in capite*?³ Or is it that David might justly say to God, Against thee only have I sinned, because from others he might appeal, as being a king, and having no superior, but no appealing from God, who is King of kings, and supreme Lord over all? Or is it that we may justly say, Against thee only I have sinned, seeing Christ hath taken, and still takes, all our sins upon him, and every sin we commit is as a new burden laid upon his back, and upon his back only? Or is it, lastly, that I justly say, Against thee only have I sinned, because in thy sight only I have done it? For from others I could hide it, and did conceal it. But what can be hidden from thy all-seeing eye? And yet, if this had been the worst, that I had sinned only against thee, though this had been bad enough, and infinitely too much, yet it might perhaps have

¹ 2 Sam. xi. ² 1 John iii. 4: "Sin is the transgression of the law." ³ Base tenants are those holding in villenage (as serfs); accordingly, "sin in a base tenure" is an offence against one's own immediate lord, while a sin against God *in capite* is an offence against Him as supreme Lord to whom our best, our "knight's service" is due.

admitted reconciliation ; but to do this evil in thy sight, as if I should say I would do it, though thou stand thyself and look on, and as it were in defiance, what sin so formidable ? what sin can be thought of so unpardonable ? A sin of infirmity may admit apology ; a sin of ignorance may find out excuse ; but a sin of defiance can have no defence. But hath not David a defence for it here, and that a very just one ? For in saying, Against thee only I have sinned, that thou mightst be justified in thy saying, doth he not speak as though he had sinned to do God a pleasure ? therefore sinned that God might be justified ? And what can be more said for justifying of a sin than to say it was done for justifying of God ? But far is it from David to have any such meaning ; his words import not a lessening, but an aggravating of his sin, as spoken rather thus, because a judge may justly be taxed of injustice, if he lay a greater punishment upon the offender than the offence deserves ; therefore to clear thee, O God, from all possibility of erring in this kind, I acknowledge my sins to be so heinous, my offences so grievous, that thou canst never be unmerciful in punishing, though thy punishing should be never so unmerciful ;—for how can a judge pass the bounds of equity where the delinquent hath passed all bounds of iniquity ? and what error can there be in thy being severe when the greatness of my fault is a justification of severity ?—that thou canst not lay so heavy a doom upon me which I have not deserved ; thou canst not pronounce so hard a sentence against me which I am not worthy of. If thou judge me to torture, it is but mildness ; if to die the death, it is but my due ; if to die everlastingly, I cannot say it were unjust. Yet in judgment, O Lord, remember mercy ; consider not how foul I am become, but how I am become foul ; for though my sin be great, yet I was not the beginner of it ; for behold I was born in iniquity, and in sin hath my mother conceived me ¹ [ver. 5]. And seeing my birth did not amend my conception, how should my growth amend my birth ? Did not sin, at least the author of sin, hear thy voice when thou saidst, Increase

¹ Ps. li. 5 : " Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." (A. V.)

and multiply?¹ which, though not spoken to him, yet, as an intruder, he claims to have a part ; and seeing all parts of my soul and body have increased and grown greater since my birth, will not he look that sin also shall have a share in growing as well as they? Doth anything grow so fast as a weed? and is there any so very a weed as sin? hath it not been growing ever since I was born? and can so fast growing, in so long growing, make less than a monster? And am I a fit champion to encounter monsters? Indeed I encountered a bear, and slew him; a lion, and killed him; a giant, and overcame him;² but these were no monsters, at least no monsters to be compared with sin. O the monstrosity of sin! far harder to be vanquished than all the monsters that ever nature made; for I could vanquish a bear, a lion, a giant, the greatest of nature's monsters, but with all my forces have not been able to vanquish this monster sin.

But why am I partial towards my parents, and charge my poor mother with conceiving me in sin, but let my father pass without blame? Or is it that to say I was born in sin is as much as to say I was begotten in sin, and so my father hath a share of sin in begetting me, as well as my mother in conceiving me? Indeed, if Eve had only sinned, and not Adam, it might have been said we were conceived in sin, but not, perhaps, that we were begotten in sin; or if Adam had only sinned, and not Eve, it might have been said we were begotten in sin, but not, perhaps, that we were conceived in sin; but now that Adam and Eve have both of them sinned, it is justly said, I was begotten in iniquity, and in sin hath my mother conceived me; and so we are all of us sinners now of the whole blood, both by father and mother, and no inheritance so sure to us from them as this of sin, and in this inheritance we are all great husbands: whatsoever becomes of Naboth's vineyard, we commonly make sure work to improve this, and we seldom leave till we can leave more of it to our children than we received from our parents; and seeing no diseases are so incurable as those which come *ex traduce* [by derivation] from either of

¹ Gen. i. 28: "Be fruitful and multiply."

² 1 Sam. xvii. 34, 50.

our parents, how incurable must sin needs be, which is *ex traduce*, from them both? If I were only born in sin, then all the time I lived in the little world of my mother's womb I must have been without sin, and so might hope thou wouldst at least have some respect to that time of innocency I lived there; but now that not only I was born in sin, but my mother also conceived me in sin, now I was a sinner as soon as a creature, and not one minute's time of innocency to plead for myself. And now, alas! O Lord, what couldst thou ever look for at my hands but only sin? The leopard cannot change her spots,¹ no more can I that am conceived in sin conceive anything but only sin. It is natural to me, and nature will have her course. But though it be natural to me to sin, yet it is not natural to me to sin so grievously as I have done, for then every one should be as great a sinner as myself; but now that I must say with St. Paul, Of all great sinners, I am the greatest,² this is an estate of sin, which I have not by inheritance, but by purchase; and I cannot blame nature, but myself, for this; all the help is, that though I might be ashamed to do it, yet I am not ashamed to confess it; and is not a sincere confessing, in the balance of thy mercy, O God, of even weight with the not doing? and therefore, although the sin I confess be great, and, being great, must needs be greatly displeasing to thee, yet this confessing my sin to be great cannot be displeasing, for Thou lovest truth in the inward affections³ [ver. 6], and this my confession comes from thence; for there is a truth in words when it is without lying, as St. Paul saith, I speak the truth, I lie not.⁴ But this truth reacheth not home to confessing of sins; and there is a truth in deeds, when it is without deceit, as Christ said of Nathaniel, Behold a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile;⁵ but neither doth this truth reach home to confessing of sins; but there is a truth in heart when it is in sincerity, as it is said here, Thou lovest truth in the inward affections; and this is the truth that carries home the con-

¹ Jer. xiii. 23. ² 1 Tim. i. 15: "Sinners, of whom I am chief." ³ Ps. li. 6: "Because thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom." (A.V.) ⁴ Rom. ix. 1. ⁵ John i. 47.

fessing of sins to its full period; for though thou lovest all truth, and everywhere, yet the truth of the inward affections thou affectest most inwardly, for this is properly within thine own survey, seeing thou only art καρδιονόστης, the trier and searcher of the heart and reins. Truth of words may have for its motive vain-glory and praise of men; truth of deeds, awe of the law; but truth in the inward affections can have no motive, but only the love of truth, which therefore must needs be pleasing to thee, who art thyself both Love and Truth.

Where thou lovest truth, thou teachest wisdom; and because thou lovest truth in the inward affections, thou teachest wisdom in the secret of the heart; and who can come to teach it there but only thou? Superficial and external wisdom is the gift oft-times of nature, sometimes of art; but this wisdom in the secret of the heart is only God's adovson: none can give it, none bestow it, but God himself, and he alone. Wherefore, O God, though I have not hated that which thou hatest, the committing of sin, yet, seeing I have loved that which thou lovest, the truth of heart, thou hast taught me wisdom in the secret of my heart: though thou didst not give me the grace to prevent sin, yet thou hast taught me the wisdom to repent sin, a wisdom which none can have unless he be taught, and none can teach but only thyself; a wisdom which cannot be had but in the heart, and nowhere in the heart but in the secret of the heart. A man may have the wisdom to see his sin by the outward eye of the heart; and he may have the wisdom to understand his sin by the common sense of the heart; but he cannot have the wisdom to repent his sin, but only in the secret and innermost of his heart. And we need not wonder that God only is the Schoolmaster of this wisdom, seeing the wisdom of the world is not capable of it; it is a secret hidden from carnal eyes. It is as hard a matter to feel the power of repentance in the soul, as to believe the resurrection from the dead in the body; both great secrets, but this perhaps the greater, as being indeed the resurrection of the soul. There are wisdoms of divers sorts in the heart of man: the voluptuous man hath a wisdom to accom-

plish his desires; the worldly man hath a wisdom to gather riches; the politician hath a wisdom to compass his ends; but all these wisdoms are but floating in the heart, or rather but hovering about the heart, as the crow about the ark; they enter not into the secret of it, nor bring into the heart, as the dove into the ark, the olive-branch of peace. For when the mind bethinks itself, and dives into its own bottom, it finds no place for these distended and swelling wisdoms, which, indeed, the secret of the heart hath not room enough to receive:¹ only the contracted wisdoms of humility and repentance can find harbour and entertainment there.

But though a little room will serve humility, yet, little as it is, it must be clean; and what one clean corner have I in my whole heart to give humility or repentance entertainment? Oh, therefore, *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow* [ver. 7]. But did not the washing I had before make me clean? and what need then of any more cleansing? It seems that washing was but only a preparative to purging, to make it work the better; at least it went not so far as the secret of the heart. And seeing the foulness of my sin hath pierced my heart to the very bottom, no remedy now but I must be purged if I will be cleansed.

But do I well to prescribe to God with what he shall purge me, as though I knew all God's medicines as well as himself? and, which is worse, I to prescribe, and he to minister? But excuse me, O my soul; it is not I that prescribe it to God; it is God that prescribes it to me; for hyssop is his own receipt, and one of the ingredients prescribed by himself to make the water of separation for curing the leprosy.² But why then with hyssop, and not with hellebore or scammony rather? For how else happens it that God's purging should not work, as he saith himself, I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged,³ but that he gives purges of too weak operation? for hyssop, God knows,

¹ Mal. iii. 10: "Prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it.*" ² Lev. xiv. 4: "Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive *and* clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop." ³ Ezek. xxiv. 13.

is but a weak purger ; it scarce reacheth to amend the errors of the first digestion ;¹ and how then is it possible it should ever be able to purge away my sins, which have tainted my blood, and are grown, as it were, a part of my very substance ? But is it not that God's arm is of a strange strength, and can put force into the weakest instruments, and therefore can do more with hyssop than all the world besides can do with hellebore ? But it is indeed the great love, or rather indulgence of God, that he will never use hellebore where hyssop will serve ; never use roughness and severity where lenity and mildness may be effectual. Reserve, then, O God, thy hellebore and thy scammony for more stubborn and reluctant humours ; purge me with hyssop only, and I shall be clean. I must confess I was glad at heart when I first heard hyssop spoken of, to think I should be purged so gently, and with a thing that may so easily be had ; for hyssop grows in every garden ; and then I thought I might go fetch it thence and purge myself ; but now I perceive this is not the hyssop of which Solomon writ, when he writ from the cedar to the hyssop, but this hyssop is rather the herb grace,² which never grew in garden but in that of Paradise, and which none can fetch thence unless God himself deliver it. The truth is, this hyssop was sometime a cedar ; the highest of all trees became the lowest of all shrubs, only to be made this hyssop for us ; for Christ indeed is the true hyssop, and his blood the juice of hyssop, that only can purge away my sins, that I need not now fear the weakness of God's purge, seeing this hyssop far exceeds, not only hellebore and scammony, but all the strongest drugs that ever the earth brought forth. Purge me, then, O God, with this true hyssop, and I shall be truly clean : wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. But how is this possible ? All

¹ Errors affecting the stomach, for digestion is "the decoction of the aliment in the stomach, or the dissolution of it, by which it is turned into chyle ;" whereas "chymus" is defined as "any kind of juice ; that especially of meat after the second digestion ; this, mixing itself with the blood, runs through veins, repairing the waste of every part."—(Bailey's Dict.) ² 1 Kings iv. 33 : "From the cedar that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall." See Hamlet iv. 5 : "There's *rose* for you ; and here's some for me : we may call it herb of grace o' Sundays : you may wear your *rose* with a difference." For the word is equivocal, and means either repentance or the medicinal herb.

the dyers upon earth cannot dye a red into a white ; and how then is it possible that my sins, which are as red as scarlet, should ever be made as white as snow ?¹ Indeed, such retrogradation is no work of human art ; it must be only his doing who brought the sun ten degrees back in the dial of Ahaz ;² for God hath a nitre³ of grace that can bring not only the redness of scarlet sins, but even the blackness of deadly sins, into its native purity and whiteness again.

But say it be possible, yet what need is there of so great a whiteness as to be whiter than snow ? seeing snow is not as *paries dealbatus*, a painted wall, white without and foul within ; but it is white, *intus et in cute*, within and without, throughout and all over ; and what eye so curious⁴ but such a whiteness may content ? yet such a whiteness will not serve, for I may be as white as snow, and yet continue a leper still ; as it is said of Gehazi that he went out from Elisha a leper as white as snow.⁵ It must be therefore whiter than snow ; and such a whiteness it is that God's washing works upon us, makes within us ; for no snow is so white in the eyes of men as a soul cleansed from sin is in the sight of God. And yet a whiter whiteness than this too ; for being purged from sin we shall *induere stolam albam*,⁶ put on the white robe ; and this is a whiteness as much whiter than snow as angelical whiteness is more than elemental.⁷

But may we not conceive rather that in saying, Purge me with hyssop, it is not meant *purgando* [by medical purgation], but *aspergendo* [by sprinkling or lustration], that so there may be two degrees expressed of using the juice of this hyssop,—one, when it is but a sprinkling only, yet enough to take away the foulness of sin ; another, when it is a full and thorough washing, which, besides the cleanliness, adds also a beauty, and that to admiration ? Indeed, the least drop of Christ's blood, the true juice of this hyssop, makes fit to stand in the congregation of the righteous ; but a full bath of it gives a high degree in the hierarchy of

¹ Isa. i. 18. ² 2 Kings xx. 11. ³ Natron, an impure soda-carbonate, of great cleansing power; cf. Jer. ii. 22. ⁴ Inquiring and exacting. ⁵ 2 Kings v. 27.
⁶ Rev. iii. 5: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment."
⁷ Elemental.

saints and angels. Howsoever, we may plainly see a great difference between the washing that was spoken of before and the washing that is spoken of here ; as great a difference as between cleanness and whiteness ; for that washing was to cleanse us, but this washing is to whiten us. Of that it was said, Wash me, and I shall be clean ; but of this it is said, Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow ; and therefore upon this it presently follows, and very justly, *Make me to hear [of] joy and gladness ; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice* [ver. 8]. For white is the emblem of joy ; and where the emblem of whiteness is once had, the motto¹ of joy and gladness will not long be behind. But we must be whited first ; for while the blackness of sin remains in the soul, there can be no emblem of whiteness engraven upon it ; but if once we be whited by God's washing, and have the emblem upon us, this motto, we may be sure, will be added to the emblem. He will make us hear of joy and gladness. And the like may be seen in the kindly order of God's physic—first a purge, and then a cordial. Having purged us with hyssop, he will make us to hear of joy and gladness ; but we must be purged first ; for while the peccant³ humours remain in the soul there is no place fit for the cordial of joy ; but if the humours be purged by the hyssop of repentance, then the heart will be lightened and the spirits refreshed, and the cordial of joy and gladness will have its full operation.

But had David ever any return of this petition? Did God ever hear it, or grant it? Oh, the wonderful graciousness of God ! He heard it, and granted it ; made a return, and that presently, and by a sure mouth—the mouth of the prophet Nathan. Behold, God hath forgiven thy sin ;² for this, no doubt, was the joy which David here makes suit to hear of, for what joy of what jubilee can make the broken bones rejoice, but this only, that we be at peace with God through the remission of our sins? David was happy that had a Nathan by whom to hear it ; but by whom may we

¹ A word or short sentence put to an emblem or device, on the coat of arms of nobility and gentry. (Bailey's Dict.) ² Injurious. ³ 2 Sam. xii. 13: "The Lord also hath put away thy sin."

hope to hear it? Indeed, [we are] as happy in this as David; for though we have not the same Nathan *in individuo* [in person], yet we may truly say we have him *in specie* [in equivalent form]; and the same message of joy which that Nathan told to David, our Nathans tell us, when they say, He pardoneth and absolveth all them which truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel;¹ which though we hear, perhaps, as words of course, yet it is the very same joy which David here makes such earnest suit to hear of.

But why should David pray to God to make him hear of joy and gladness, and not rather do as his son Solomon did afterward, gather gold and silver, get him men-singers and women-singers,² and so make joy and gladness to himself? Alas, my soul! these are joys to be repented of, and not joys to repentance; for but for such delights as these, I had never fallen into these sorrows; they have been my snares, and cannot now be comforts: it is not all the delights and pleasures of the world that can ease one pang of a penitent heart. The sorrows are spiritual, and must have spiritual joys. Thou, O God, hast caused the sorrows, and thou only canst minister the comforts.

Qui vulnera fecit,
Solut Achilleo tollere more potest.

[He only can, Achilles-like, heal, who caused the wounds.]

But say, O my soul, how came thy bones to be broken? Hath this been the work of God's hyssop? Is the breaking of bones the gentle purging that was talked of? What could hellebore or scammony have done more? And yet thou canst not wonder so much at the force of God's purging to break thy bones, as thou mayest wonder at the force of his cordial to make thy broken bones rejoice; and that which thou mayest wonder at more, the same hyssop is both the cordial and the purge. Wonderful indeed, that the same thing should both break the bones and make the broken bones rejoice; yet so it is, for this hyssop is not only

¹ Quotation from the "Absolution" in the Book of Common Prayer. ² Eccl. ii. 8.

a cleanser, but a knitter and binder together ; and as by the force of cleansing it breaks the bones, so by the virtue of knitting together it makes the broken bones rejoice ; for what greater joy to broken bones than to be knit together and made whole again ? It was not I, God knows, that broke my bones ; I could never have had the heart to do it. It is thou, O God, didst break them, and that in mercy ; for thou knewest that unless my bones were broken, my sin that is bred in the bone could never be thoroughly purged away. And now, O God, if I be not purged enough already, purge me yet more, and purge me still, until I be made more white than snow ; but then make me to hear of joy and gladness, for without this cordial I shall faint in my purging, and shall never be able to go through with thy course of physic, for my bones are already broken, and I have scarce any blood left me in my veins ; but if thou give me this cordial of joy and gladness, my strength will return, and my broken bones will be made whole again.

But why is it said, Make me to hear of joy and gladness ; and not said rather, Make me to feel joy and gladness ? For were it not better to feel joy than only to hear of joy ? But, indeed, we cannot feel this joy unless we hear it first ; and if once we hear it, it is then our own fault if we do not feel it. For what is this joy but that of which the angels brought tidings to the shepherds, Behold I bring you tidings of great joy : this day is born to you a Saviour,¹ one that shall make whole again all broken bones, seeing he is one of whom there shall not a bone be broken.² But what is this to us, that his bones be not broken, if ours be ? Great good to us, if we be purged with this hyssop, for then we shall be united and knit unto him, made flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone ; that if his bones be sound, and not broken, our bones shall quickly withal recover soundness. And yet a greater joy to be heard of than this, for then indeed we shall hear of our greatest joy, when we shall hear this voice, Arise, thou that sleepest, and stand up, and God shall give

¹ Luke ii. 10, 11 : " Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." ² John xix. 36 ; Ps. xxxiv. 20.

thee light;¹ for at the hearing of this voice, all bones, though broken into a thousand pieces, though burnt, or beaten to dust and ashes, shall all come together and be knit together, and shall be covered again with this very flesh;² and in this flesh I shall see my Redeemer.³ And now, O my soul, thou mayest comfort thyself in hope that, though thy bones be broken now, yet a time will come when they shall rejoice, and should never indeed rejoice if they were not now broken; for this is a world for breaking of bones; but we look for a new heaven and a new earth,⁴ when for their breaking now they shall have beauty for ashes, and a garment of gladness for the spirit of heaviness.⁵

But, O merciful God, put me not off so long for my joy; my broken bones will be in a worse case than Lazarus's body was after four days' burying,⁶ if thou let me lie so long in the grave of thy displeasure. My case requires a present remedy, and a remedy may be applied in the turning of a hand, at least, with the turning of a face. Only turn away thy face from my sins⁷ [ver. 9], and my broken bones will quickly rejoice; for to turn away thy face from my sins is to turn away thine anger for my sins; and to turn away thine anger is to receive me into grace; and if of this I might be once assured, it would make my broken bones more nimble to leap for joy than Abraham was to see thy day;⁸ for as it was the apprehension of thine anger that broke my bones, so nothing can set them together, and put them in joint again, until I be secured of thy grace and favour.

But am I well advised in praying God to turn away his face from my sins? for am I not so wholly overspread with sin, that if he turn away his face from my sin, he must needs turn it away from me too; and then in what horror of darkness should I be left? But is it not that thy wisdom, O God, is so transcendent that thou canst easily abstract the sinner from the sin; and then the more thou turnest thy

¹ Eph. v. 14: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." ² Cf. Ezek. xxxvii. 1-10, the vision of dry bones. ³ Job xix. 26: "In my flesh shall I see God." ⁴ 2 Pet. iii. 13. ⁵ Isa. lxi. 3: "To give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." ⁶ John xi. 39. ⁷ Ps. li. 9: "Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities." (A.V.) ⁸ John viii. 56.

face from my sin, the more thou wilt turn thy face upon me, and the more I shall enjoy the light of thy countenance?¹ If thou shouldst not turn away thy face from my sin, but stand looking upon it, alas, O God, it would be a worse sight than that which Ham saw in his father's nakedness; and a good son turned away his face from that,² and canst thou be a good Father, and not turn away thy face from this? God forbid, thou shouldst ever say to me, as thou didst once to our first parent, Adam, Where art thou?³ a question that was never asked but when it was followed with a curse. For why shouldst thou ask where I am, but that thou canst not see where I am? and how can it be thou shouldst not see where I am, but that thou canst not see me for sin? Use then, O God, the transcendency of thy wisdom, abstract me from my sin, and make my sin and me two several objects, that, turning thy face from my sin, thou mayest turn it upon me, and not need to ask me where I am, but mayest see me where I am, and by seeing me make me enjoy the light of thy countenance.

But is my sin so pleasing a prospect that I should need to fear lest God should stand looking upon it? Indeed, after his first creation, he looked upon all his creatures, and saw them all exceeding good,⁴ and this was a prospect worth his looking on. But my sins, O God, are none of thy creatures; there is no goodness at all to be seen in them; therefore, look not upon my sins, but upon my repentance, and in this thou shalt find *veteris vestigia formæ* [some traces of the pristine beauty], that thou needst not to alter thy style, but say still, It is exceeding good. But seeing, if thou turn away thy face from my sin, thou must needs turn it upon something else, upon what is it indeed I would have thee to turn it? Upon me? No. Upon my repentance? Neither. But though not upon my sins, yet upon him that hath taken my sins upon him, that as in him thou art well pleased,⁵ so through him thou mayest be well pleased with me, and with my repentance.

But what safety is it to me that God turn away his face if

¹ Ps. iv. 6. ² Gen. ix. 22, 23. ³ Gen. iii. 9. ⁴ Gen. i. 31. ⁵ Matt. iii. 17.

his ears stand open? for my sins are crying sins, and it may be as hurtful to me that God hear their cry as see their foulness. For what brought Cain to all his misery but that God heard the cry of his sin?¹ But know, O my soul, that God consists not of parts, though our weak capacities express him so; and if we express him by parts, know also there is an absolute and sweet harmony between them in God, that if his face be turned away from seeing the foulness of our sins, his ears shall never stand open to let in their crying.

But what am I the better that thou turn away thy face from my sin, if my sin continue and remain upon me still? For is it not the bold nature of sin to be always pressing into thy sight, and as it were forcing thee to see it, whether thou wilt or no? Oh, therefore, not only turn away thy face from my sins, but blot my sins out, that as by turning away thy face thou mayest not see my sins, so by blotting them out I may have no sins to be seen. But if God turn away his face from my sins, how shall he see to blot them out? Not, therefore, *faciem cognitionis*, but *faciem indignationis*,—not his face with which he sees all things, but his face with which he frowns upon evil things.

But are not my sins themselves blots? and how can blots be blotted out? They are blots indeed upon my soul, but they are fair characters² in God's book; and there is a relation between God's book and my soul, that if they be blotted out in his book, they shall never be legible in my soul.

But, O gracious God, I dare not trust to this neither; for though by blotting them out they may be made not legible, yet the very blotting them out will be a mark of remembrance that they were once there; and is it not a fearful thing to think thou shouldst but once remember them? Oh, therefore, not only blot my sins out, but *create in me a clean heart*³ [ver. 10], that as by blotting them out they may be made not legible, so by creating in me a clean heart there may be no

¹ Gen. iv. 10. ² They are clearly expressed, distinctly written down. ³ Ps. li. 10: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." (A. V.)

mark of remembrance that ever they were written. Indeed, this blotting out of sins is but an ablative case¹ in the work of sanctification; the dative is of much more use, for this dative² is the giving me a new heart; and seeing the heart is the beginning of life, by having a new heart I shall begin a new life, and the sins of my old heart shall be no more remembered.

O great God, into how many several forms of assistance do we miserable sinners diversify thy glorious majesty? We made thee first our Launderer,³ to wash us; then our Physician, to purge us; and now our Creator, to new make us;⁴ and indeed there was no staying till we came hither. Our dove can find no rest for the sole of her foot till she return into this ark again;⁵ for if my sin were only a foulness, it might be helped with washing; or if only a staining, it might be helped with purging; but seeing it is a total and absolute corruption, now nothing can help it but a new creation.

But how should David come to be so foul? Was it by conversing with Bathsheba?⁶ But what foulness could he take from her, who came but then newly out of her bath?⁷ O my soul, it is not a bath of milk and roses that can make a cleanness in God's sight. God hath strange eyes; he can see foulness in Bathsheba, though coming out of a neat⁸ bath; and can see cleanness in Jeremiah, though coming out of a dirty dungeon;⁹ he can see foulness upon Dives, for all his deliciousness and daintiness; and can see cleanness upon Lazarus, for all his lying amongst the dogs.¹⁰ This David knew well, and therefore all his suit is still for cleanness: Wash me, and cleanse me from my sins; purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; create in me a clean heart, O God.¹¹ All for cleanness still; for he knew if he could get cleanness he should have a beauty which the stars want, for the stars are not clean in God's sight;¹² he knew that by having a clean heart, he should not only be fit for God to see, but fit to see God; as Christ said, Blessed are the

¹ A case of removal, of taking away. ² A case of giving. ³ Masc. form of laundress. ⁴ Ps. li. 2, 7, 10. ⁵ Gen. viii. 9. ⁶ See title of this Psalm. ⁷ s. Sam. xi. 2, 4. ⁸ Clean. ⁹ Jer. xxxviii. 6. ¹⁰ Luke xvi. 19, etc. ¹¹ Ps. li. 2, 7, 10. ¹² Job xv. 15: "The heavens are not clean in his sight."

clean of heart, for they shall see God.¹ And then, if to be seen of God be the greatest glory, and to see God the greatest happiness, O how glorious and happy must a clean heart needs be that is made capable to enjoy them both !

Oh, therefore, create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me ; for thou hast not so finished thy work of creation but that thou retainest thy power of creating still ; and wherein canst thou better employ that power than in creating of clean hearts ? It was a work of infinite glory to be the Creator of heaven and earth, yet to be the Creator of clean hearts is of all thy works of glory the most glorious work. And, indeed, were it not better for me, and more ease for God, to create in me a clean heart once for all than to be so troubled with continual purgings and washings, as now he is, as now I am ? for alas, O Lord, thou mayest sooner purge my heart out of my body than purge sin out of my heart, but that it will always be returning to its vomit,² and I shall break thy rest continually with importuning thee to wash me.

But why do I pray to God for a clean heart, and not as well for clean eyes and clean hands, seeing these also have their share in foulness as well as that ? But is it not that these are but the emissaries of the heart, and do all they do by the heart's direction ; that if the heart be clean, these also will be clean of course ; mine eyes will be clean, and never look more after any more Bathshebas ; my hands will be clean, and never be more imbrued in the blood of any Uriahs.³

But did not God create in me a clean heart once already ? And yet how foul is it grown now ? And what hope is there if he create in me a new clean heart, but that it will grow as foul as this I now have ? But can it properly be said that God did ever create in me a clean heart before ? He *made* me one indeed, but he *created* me none ; he only created heaven and earth, as it is said, In the beginning God created heaven and earth,⁴ and of that earth he made me a body,⁵

¹ Matt. v. 8 : "Blessed are the pure in heart," etc. ² 2 Pet. ii. 22. ³ 2 Sam. xi. 2, 14—17. ⁴ Gen. i. 1. ⁵ Gen. i. 26 : "Let us make man." Gen. ii. 7 : "The LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground," but see Gen. i. 27 : "So God created man."

and in that body a heart ; so I had a made heart before, but not a created heart till now ; for made is of matter pre-existent, but created is of nothing : although therefore my made heart, being made of dust, hath always been apt to gather dust, yet my created heart, as made of nothing, will have nothing in it from whence to gather foulness. But, O my soul, trust not to this ; for though there should be no foulness in the heart itself, yet the stink of the prison in which it lies will be always cause enough to breed infection, unless thou canst get some such sovereign perfume that may keep [from harming us] our ill airs and keep the place sweet. Oh, therefore, not only create in me a clean heart, but renew a right spirit within me ; for this right spirit makes a better perfume than that of Tobias's fish,¹ to keep all unclean spirits from coming near the heart. As therefore Moses described the genesis of man by saying that God first made him a body, and then breathed a soul into him,² so David describes here the *palingenesis* [regeneration or new creation] of man by saying, Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me ; that if Nicodemus had well understood this Psalm of David, he needed not to have made such a wonder at Christ's speech, when he said, Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven ;³ for what is it to be regenerate and born again but to have a clean heart created, and a right spirit renewed in us ? If only a clean heart be created, and not withal a right spirit renewed within me, this will be but *vehiculum sine auriga* [a chariot with no driver] ; and I shall presently fall into the mire of sin again, and grow as foul as ever I was before ; but if thou vouchsafe to add a right spirit to my clean heart, this will keep me right in the paths of righteousness ; and then, as I now praise thee for making me clean, so shall I praise thee as much, or rather much more, for keeping me clean.

Thou, O God, that art the Maker, art also the Renewer of all things, yet I ask thee for renewing of nothing in me, but only a right spirit: my years are waxed old, and vanished away

¹ Tobit vi. and viii. ² Gen. ii. 7. ³ John iii. 3: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" and ver. 5: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

as a smoke,¹ yet I require thee not to renew them; my strength is dried up like a potsherd,² and my moisture is turned into the drought of summer,³ yet I require thee not to renew them; all my worldly friends are either taken from me or gone from me, yet I require thee not to renew them; all that I require thee to renew to me is only a right spirit, for so long as this right spirit remained with me and was my guide, I walked before thee in all uprightness; I durst then say, Search me, O God, and try me; examine my heart and my reins;⁴ but as soon as this spirit grew to decay and waxed faint within me, I presently begun to falter in my steps; my iniquities multiplied so fast that they quickly grew to be more than the hairs of my head;⁵ everything was a temptation unto me, and every temptation prevailed against me; but now, O God, renew a right spirit within me, and this right spirit will set all right that is amiss in me, because it is a right spirit; will renew and quicken all that is dead and dull within me, because it is all spirit.

But what more good will a right spirit do when it is renewed, than it did before, when it was first given? If it prospered not at the first planting, what assurance of prospering at the second? But is it not that a right spirit in a created heart may stand firm, though in a made heart it gave ground and failed? and specially when it is a right spirit renewed, seeing renovation is always with addition of strength, and no part of a house is commonly so strong as that part is which is newly repaired. *Secundæ cogitationes* are *sapientiores*, and *secundi conatus* are *fortiores* [Second thoughts are wiser and second efforts stronger]. Though once going about Jericho did the walls no hurt, yet the going about them again and again made them fall to the ground;⁶ though one cock crowing wrought nothing upon Peter, yet the second time's crowing made him weep bitterly.⁷ Oh, then, renew in me a right spirit, O God, and the walls of my sinful Jericho will fall to the ground, the stupor of my dull brains will resolve into tears.

¹ Ps. cii. 3: "For my days are consumed like smoke." ² Ps. xxii. 15. ³ Ps. xxxii. 4. ⁴ Ps. cxxxix. 23: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts." ⁵ Ps. xl. 12: "Mine iniquities . . . are more than the hairs of my head." ⁶ Josh. vi. 18-20. ⁷ Mark xiv. 30, 68, 72.

When sin seeks to enter, and to get entertainment with us, it makes us believe we shall be like gods;¹ but when it is once entered, and hath gotten possession, it leaves us to find we are not so much as fit for God's company; and it seems as though we were put to our choice here, whether we will have sin's company or God's, for both we cannot have: if entertain sin, then we must take our leave of God; if enjoy God's presence, then we must give no entertainment to sin: a hard choice to flesh and blood, but a right spirit resolves it presently. Cast me not off from thy presence, O God² [ver. 11]; let me enjoy that; and as for sin, I utterly renounce it, though it should present itself to me in greater pomp than Solomon clothed in all his royalty.³ I had rather live one day in thy courts,⁴ to enjoy thy presence, than to live accounted the son of Pharaoh's daughter,⁵ and Methuselah's age,⁶ in all the pleasures of the world. Do we see how the presence of the sun cheers up the air, makes glad the earth, and enlightens the whole world, and can we not see the wonderful effects of comfort which are wrought in the soul by the presence of God, in comparison of whom the sun is not so much as a mote in the sun? If it be thy pleasure, O God, to withdraw thy presence from me, to make me sensible of my weakness, yet cast me not off from thy presence in displeasure, to make me despair of thy love. If thou wilt needs put a veil upon thy face, to keep mine eyes from seeing thee, yet let it be but as the veil upon Moses' face, to keep mine eyes from dazzling.⁷ It is potion bitter enough to be deprived of thy presence, though done in never so fair a manner; but to be cast out of thy presence, as done in anger, what is this but to give me gall and wormwood to drink? If I needs must die, let it be on the top of Nebo, where I may see the land of Canaan before me,⁸ for there thy presence is to comfort me; but let it not be in the valley, where there is no representation of thy glorious presence to give me comfort. My sin, O God, I know is

¹ Gen. iii. 5. ² Ps. li. 12: "Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy spirit from me." (A.V.) ³ Matt. vi. 29: "Solomon in all his glory."
⁴ Ps. lxxxiv. 10. ⁵ Heb. xi. 24. ⁶ Gen. v. 27. ⁷ Exod. xxxiv. 30, 33. ⁸ Deut. xxxiv. 1-5.

such that may justly make me to fly from thy presence, as it once made Adam, when he hid himself from thee;¹ yet in this case I may hope thou wilt look after me, as thou didst then vouchsafe to look after him; but if thou cast me out of thy presence, and that it be done by thine own hand, alas, O Lord! what hope is there left me of ever coming into thy presence again? As long as I am in thy presence, there is hope; I may entreat, and thou art apt to be entreated; I may fall down and humble myself, and thou givest grace to the humble;² but if it should once come to this, that I were cast out of thy presence, alas, O God! thou wouldst then be quite out of sight, clean out of hearing, that no entreaty could be heard, no humbling be seen, either to give me the comfort of hope, or to put me in hope of any comfort. If thou, O God, shouldst cast me off from thy presence, whom could I hope to have present with me? The angels would be my guardians no longer, for they would soon take notice of thy displeasure, and would never regard [one] whom thou rejectest. The saints would be my associates no longer, for if they found me not in thy presence they would perfectly know I was none of their society, and their communion extends no further. And what company then could I hope to have? Cain, perhaps, and Ham, the damned crew, miserable comforters,³ or rather no comforters, but augmenters of my misery. But yet, O God, if my sins unexpressible have made thee inexorable, and that thou wilt needs cast me off from thy presence, at least take not thy Holy Spirit from me; for what were this but to put me out of thy service, and then to take away thy livery too? Yet as long as I have thy livery on, it keeps me in credit, it gives me countenance, it leaves me hope I may be entertained again; as long as thy Holy Spirit stays with me, I have one to comfort me, one to put me in hope I may be received into favour again; in no worse case than Pharaoh's butler was, who, in disgrace for a time, was afterwards restored to his former place;⁴ but if thou take thy livery from me, if thou take thy Holy Spirit from me, alas, O Lord! I am then

¹ Gen. iii. 8.² Jas. iv. 6.³ Job xvi. 2.⁴ Gen. xl. 13.

utterly undone ; none left to comfort me ; none to speak for me ; in as ill a case as Pharaoh's baker,—nothing left me to hope in but a dream, and that dream nothing but of white baskets, out of which the birds shall eat, but nothing that is good for me to taste.¹ If thy Holy Spirit should of himself depart from me, it would be a parting exceeding grievous unto me ; but for thee, O God, to take him from me, where the manner of losing is as much as the loss, what grief can be spoken of so unspeakable ?

But having said, Cast me not off from thy presence, it may seem superfluous to say, Take not thy Holy Spirit from me ; seeing this of necessity follows upon that ; for how can God's Holy Spirit be but where he is himself ? and how can it tarry with me, if I tarry not with him ? They both indeed grow upon one tree, yet are several fruits. God's presence brings with it a passive influence, his Holy Spirit an active ; although therefore, O God, thou bar me of thy presence, and leave me inglorious,² yet take not away thy Holy Spirit from me, to leave me profane. Thy Holy Spirit is the Sanctifier,³ and wilt thou leave me to impiety and profaneness ? Thy Holy Spirit is the Director,⁴ and wilt thou leave me without a guide in the dangerous passages of this wicked world ? Thy Holy Spirit is the Comforter, and wilt thou leave me disconsolate⁵ in my manifold miseries ? If thou take thy Holy Spirit from me, what spirit will be left me but a spirit of error, a spirit of uncleanness, a spirit of despair ? and canst thou for pity leave me a prey to such outrageous spirits ? O Lord, though my sins be as great as Cain's, yet suffer me not to despair like Cain ;⁶ though my sins be greater than Saul's, yet suffer me not to distrust thee like Saul ;⁷ but as it is a benefit, so let it be a pledge of thy presence, and of thy Holy Spirit ; that I can pray unto thee for thy presence, and for the continuance of thy Holy Spirit. When I remember the sweet comforts I have sometimes found in the motions of thy Holy Spirit, and when I think

¹ Gen. xl. 16—19. ² 1 Sam. iv. 22 : "The glory is departed from Israel : for the ark of God is taken." ³ 1 Pet. i. 2 : "Through sanctification of the Spirit."

⁴ Rom. viii. 14 : "Led by the Spirit." ⁵ John xiv. 16—18. ⁶ Gen. iv. 13.

⁷ 1 Sam. xxviii. 15.

of the joy I have conceived of thy salvation, oh, how my heart seems to leap within me, and how am I ravished with ecstasies of delight? And now to think this comfort should be taken from me, this joy should be bereft me,—oh, what torment, what death, what hell can be so grievous!

But how can God cast me off from his presence, though he would? Is not God everywhere? and am not I somewhere? and must I not, then, needs be where he is, and in his presence? God indeed hath a presence of being, and this is everywhere; and he hath a presence of power, and this is everywhere; but he hath a presence of grace and favour, and this is not everywhere. His presence of power is as well in the ant as in the elephant; yet it maketh not the ant an elephant; and therefore this is not the presence that I desire. His presence of being is as well in hell as in heaven;¹ yet it makes not the hell a heaven; and therefore neither is this the presence that I desire: but his presence of grace and favour is not as well in the wicked as in the penitent; for if it were, it would make the wicked penitent; and therefore this is the presence which I so much long to keep, which I so much fear to lose.

But why should I fear lest God should cast me off from his presence? Is not his delight amongst the children of men?² and am not I one of that generation? And why should I fear lest he should take his Holy Spirit from me? Was it not he that gave it me at first? and is he one that will give a thing and then take it away again? Yet my sins make me that I cannot but fear; for why should he not cast me out of his sight, who have wrought so much wickedness in his sight? why should he let his Holy Spirit stay there, where it is so much grieved? for what do my grievous sins but grieve it? Oh, vile sin, of what cause thou art the effect, I know not; but this I know, thou art the cause of most vile effects, for thou only art the cause that God is like to cast me off from his presence; thou only the cause that God is like to take his Holy Spirit from me; and, seeing in God's presence there is fulness of joy for evermore, alas, in being cast out

¹ Ps. cxxxix. 8.² Prov. viii. 31.

of his presence, what is left me but the fulness of misery for evermore !

But seeing thou hast not cast me off from thy presence, but only removed thy presence from me, because thy pure nature could not endure to stay in a polluted heart ; yet now that I am new made, and that thou hast created a clean heart within me,—now thou mayest return, and restore to me the comfort of thy presence, the joy of thy salvation ; and by this thou shalt show thou didst not take it away to keep it away, but to make it more precious in restoring ; thou shalt show thou didst not leave me to forsake me, but to make thyself more welcome in returning. But though some things are of such condition that we find their goodness more by wanting than by enjoying, as sickness makes us more sensible of health, yet this needed not in the comfort of thy presence, seeing of this there can be no satiety, and we can never so well learn to desire thee by wanting thee as we are taught to embrace thee by enjoying thee.

Although the suits I make to thee, O God, be many, yet they are all so subordinate to one another, that if thou deniest me one, it were as good for me thou shouldst deny them all ; for what good will it do me to have a clean heart created in me, and thy blessed presence removed from me ? what good to have a right spirit renewed, and thy Holy Spirit to be taken away, as if thou shouldst supply me with props, and take away foundations ? The fear of this, lest thou shouldst cast me out of thy presence, and take thy Holy Spirit from me, hath so deeply wrought upon me, and brought me so low, that I find no physic now so necessary for me as a restorative. Oh, therefore, Restore to me the joy of thy salvation¹ [ver. 12] ; for this restorative exceeds not only all the simples of nature, but all the compounds of art, for what alchermes,² what gellies,³ what *aurum potable* [drink-

¹ Ps. li. 12 : "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation ; and uphold me with thy free spirit." (A.V.) ² Or alchermes, "a confection made of certain red or scarlet grains, called kermes." (Bailey's Dict.) This kermes (akin to the cochineal insect) is defined as "the grain of the scarlet oak." (Bailey). ³ Or jellies, "liquor of meat, etc., boiled to a thick consistence." (Bailey's Dict.)

able gold],¹ can be comparable to this restorative, the joy of thy salvation? But had not this been a fitter suit for Nebuchadnezzar, from whom God took away at once his sense, his reason, and his kingdom,² than for David, from whom God never took anything that we know of, but only his child begotten in adultery?³ Yet David will hardly be drawn to think so, for hear the moan he makes: Alas, O Lord! I live now, as it were, cast out of thy presence, which is more to me than for Nebuchadnezzar to be cast out of his kingdom. I feed now upon the bread of sorrow, which is more to me than for Nebuchadnezzar to feed upon the grass of the earth; I sit now as a sparrow upon the housetop,⁴ desolate and disconsolate, which is more to me than for Nebuchadnezzar to have no companions but the beasts of the field; and yet, O Lord, only restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and it shall be more to me than for Nebuchadnezzar to be restored to his sense, his reason, his kingdom again. This joy is to me as Isaac was to Abraham,⁵ the whole comfort of my life; and thou restoredst him to his father in great compassion, and wilt thou have no compassion on me, and not restore my Isaac to me again? O merciful God, take away my goods, take away my health, take away my life, but take not away this joy from me, unless thou mean to restore it again; for without this joy my goods will do me no good, I shall be sick of my health, I shall be weary of my life; all joy without this joy is but a shadow of joy—no solidness, no substance in it. Other joys I can want,⁶ and yet want⁷ no joy; but how can I want the joy of thy salvation but I must needs fall into the hell of my own perdition?

Indeed, all these graces, and specially these four, a right spirit, and God's presence, his Holy Spirit, and the joy of his salvation, are all, I may say, of a covey like partridges, that always keep together; or if at any time parted by violence, they never leave calling after one another till they meet

¹ Gold make liquid so as to be drinkable: or rather a rich cordial liquor with pieces of leaf-gold in it. (Bailey's Dict.) ² Dan. iv. 31—33. ³ 2 Sam. xii. 15—19.
⁴ Ps. cii. 7: "I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the housetop." ⁵ Gen. xxii. 11—13. ⁶ Be without. ⁷ Lack, need.

again. And thus a right spirit calls after God's presence, his presence after his Holy Spirit, his Holy Spirit after the joy of his salvation, and the joy of his salvation calls after them all. O then, Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, that this covey of thy graces may be kept together, and that the mournful voice of calling after one another may no more be heard to disquiet my soul.

But how can God restore that which he took not away? For can I charge God with the taking away the joy of his salvation from me? O gracious God, I charge not thee with taking it, but myself with losing it; and such is the miserable condition of us poor wretches, that if thou shouldst restore no more to us than what thou takest from us, we should quickly be at a fault in our estates, and our ruin would be as sudden as inevitable.

But why am I so earnest for restoring? for what good will restoring do me if I cannot keep it when I have it? and how shall I more keep it, being restored, than I kept it before being enjoyed? And if I so enjoy it as still [to] fear to lose it, what joy can there be in such enjoying? O therefore, not restore it only, but establish me with thy free Spirit, that as by thy restoring I may enjoy it entirely, so by thy establishing I may enjoy it securely. Indeed, if thou shouldst only restore it, and then leave it for me to keep, I should presently run a hazard of losing it again; but when thou restorest it, and then confirmest it, and that with the seal of thy free Spirit,¹ this gives me an indefeasible² estate, and absolutely frees me from fear of losing it any more for ever. Alas, my soul, what qualms have these been? what floatings between fear and hope? All the comfort is that as hope sets out first, and gets the start of fear, so it keeps the field last, and gets the goal from fear. For hope, setting out by God's renewing a right spirit, and then disturbed by fear lest he should take away his Holy Spirit, gets the victory at last by being established with God's free Spirit; for this establishing fixeth our floating, and frees us from having these qualms of

¹ Eph. i. 13, 14: "Ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance," etc. ² That cannot be defeated or made void (Bailey's Dict.)

fear and hope any more. Not that we can ever be free where they are, but that they should be where we are; not fear, because in a haven; not hope, because in possession.

But what mystery is it that David intends here by his triplicity of spirits—a right spirit, a holy spirit, a free and principal¹ spirit? Are they not all one Holy Ghost, but divers operations,—called, therefore, the right Spirit, because it directeth us; the holy Spirit, because it sanctifieth us; the free and principal Spirit, because it governs us? And thus understood, we may see from whence the collect in our Liturgy was gathered, which saith, Direct, sanctify, and govern us in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments.² Or is it that he makes three suits for three spirits, as intending³ to every person in the Deity; one intimating the second person by the right Spirit, as being the way and the truth;⁴ the third person by the Holy Spirit, as being the author of sanctification;⁵ the first person by the free and principal Spirit, it being he that must say, *Fiat* [let there be⁶], to all that is done? And thus understood, we may see from whence is framed that versicle in our Litany which saith, “O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three Persons and one God, have mercy upon us miserable sinners.”

And now is David *montepotitus* [one who has scaled a mountain], gotten up, I may say, to the top of Mount Gerizim,⁷ after many wearisome and painful steps. He was indeed so oppressed with the burden, and so fettered with the chain of his sins, that he seemed as a man distracted, not knowing in the world what course to take; yet not willing to be wanting to himself, he tries all the ways and useth all the means he can possibly devise or think of. First, he prays God to wash him from his sins; and lest washing should not be sufficient, he prays next to be purged from his sins; but not trusting to these outward means, he thinks upon a new course, and prays to have

¹ The Vulgate has “*principali spiritu*,” with thy principal or governing spirit.
² After the Offertory in the “Order of the Administration of the Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion.” ³ Directing attention. ⁴ John xiv. 6: “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” ⁵ 1 Pet. i. 2: “Through sanctification of the Spirit.”
⁶ Gen. i. 3, 6, 14. ⁷ The mountain of blessings, see Deut. xi. 9.

his sins blotted out, as much as to have God's debt-book crossed; yet not satisfied with this neither, he then flies to inward means, and prays not only to have a clean heart created, but a right spirit renewed in him, that so he may be *purus corpore et spiritu* [pure in body and spirit]; and now one would think he were certainly past all danger yet even here he falls into the most dismal frights that ever seized upon a perplexed soul, for he fears lest God should cast him off from his presence, and lest he should take his Holy Spirit from him,—most dismal frights indeed; yet recovering his spirits, he bethinks himself at last of a way that either will serve to make him a free man, or he must never look to be; and that is, to be established with God's free Spirit, and this indeed strikes the stroke, and therefore this he makes his *murus aheneus* [wall of brass], for being now established with God's free Spirit, he finds himself so free, that he thinks himself able to set up a free school, and is confident to say, *Then will I teach thy ways to the wicked, and sinners shall be converted unto thee*¹ [ver. 13]. Then if thou say unto me, *Et tu conversus, converte fratres* [And thou, when thou art converted, convert thy brethren],² I shall do it, both boldly and effectually: boldly, for I shall teach thy ways to the wicked, who are but unruly scholars; and effectually, for sinners shall be converted unto thee, which is the end of all schooling. And then, if the angels give a *plaudite* [a clapping of hands] to their conversion, I doubt not, O God, but thou also wilt graciously accept the humble service of the converter, and even thyself shalt receive a benefit in thy glory, by the benefit which I receive by thy pardon; for as there have been many scandalled³ by my sin, so there shall be many reclaimed by my repentance; and they who loved thee not for thy justice, shall fear thee for thy mercy; and they who feared thee not for thy mercy, shall love thee for thy justice, and thy name shall be great amongst all nations.⁴ O happy conversion

¹ Ps. li. 13: "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." (A.V.) ² Luke xxii. 32: "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." ³ Scandalized, caused to stumble. ⁴ Jer. xxxiii. 9: "A name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth."

that is not barren, and ends in itself, which was a curse in Israel ; but, as a fruitful mother, continues a race of conversions, and shall therefore make the converter shine in heaven, as a star of the greater magnitude.¹

But am I a fit man to teach thy ways to the wicked, who have walked all my life long in the ways of wickedness? Am I likely to be a means for converting of sinners, who have hitherto been occasion of perverting the godly? Thou, O God, that tookest Amos from among the herdmen of Tekoa,² to make him a prophet, thou also canst take me from among the wicked of the world, to make me a converter of sinners. I take not upon me to teach the godly, who may better teach me ; I teach only the wicked. None but sinners are for my school ; I am not a shepherd to tend the fold, but to fetch in strayers. The title of my profession is *dux conversorum*, a guide of converts : all my doctrine is only repentance ; and if any such be that need no repenting, they need not my teaching, nor belong to my school. But if any man think repentance a lesson so easy that he can take it out and learn it without a teacher, let him but hear the lesson read which I have learned, and [which] he must if he will be a convert. Let him see my eyes swollen with the floods of my tears, and so must his be ; let him see me lie grovelling under sackcloth and ashes, and so must he do ; let him see my knees brawned with kneeling at prayer, and so must his be ; let him see me go fasting with bread and water, and so must he do ; let him see my back gored with stripes of contrition, and so must his be ; let him see my breast torn with sighings and groanings, and so must he do ; and if all this be not enough to make a hard lesson, let him see my heart broken and shivered with sorrow, and so must his be. And now let flesh and blood tell me if this be a lesson to be learned without a teacher.

But if repentance be so hard a lesson to learn, how can David be so confident of his teaching to say that

¹ Dan. xii. 3 : " They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament ; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." ² Amos i. 1.

sinner shall be converted by it? Indeed, when kings become schoolmasters, no marvel if sinners become converts; for who knows not the force of *regis ad exemplum* [according to the king's example]? But is David then the only phoenix¹ in this kind? Have we not amongst us at this day,—and long may we have a king like David, who though he teach not the same lesson that David did (for his lesson was only repentance), yet his whole life is a picture of piety and uprightness,—a lesson so much better than David's, as to be in the first form of virtue is far more worthy than to be but in the second?

But oh, the uneasy state of a guilty conscience! David was much troubled at first about procuring his cleanness, and now he seems as much troubled about expressing his foulness. Is it the *malus genius* [evil nature] of sin, that is never without fear, and therefore creeps into all corners? or is it the *bonus genius* [good nature] of repentance, that is never without care, and therefore searcheth all corners? David had asked God forgiveness for his iniquity, his sin, his offences, his transgressions—corners enough to meet with any sin of what kind soever; but is it enough to confess our sins and to ask forgiveness in general terms, and never to make mention of any sin in particular? Indeed, where sins be infinite, it were an infinite labour to mention them all, and with all our labour could never be done; but yet, where there are eminent sins—sins, like Saul, higher than their fellows by head and shoulders²—not to mention such sins were a kind of concealing them, as if we meant to hide them in the throng, that they might pass unperceived; and there must be no concealing if we look for cancelling. Behold, then, O God, an eminent sin—a sin indeed like Saul, so high above his fellows that I dare not say what it is without saying, *Deliver me first; Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation*³ [ver. 14]. And blame me not for

¹ "A bird in Arabia, about the bigness of an eagle, which is reported to live 600 years; and that there is but one of them in the world at a time; and that she, having lived that time, builds her a nest of combustible spices, which being set on fire by the sun, she fans it with her wings, and burns herself in it: and that a worm rises out of her ashes, which comes to be a new phoenix." (Bailey's Dict.) ² 1 Sam. ix. 2. ³ Ps. li. 14: "Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness."

doubling the name of God here, seeing it is a deliverance that requires a double proportion of God's assistance ; for though every sin may be said a sin of blood, as whereof the wages is death,¹ yet this actual shedding of blood is a sin of the most scarlet die, and stands in need of the greatest measure of God's free Spirit to free it.

But what need David pray God to deliver him from blood-guiltiness ? for what blood had he shed ? Much, no doubt, in war ; but that was lawful, and left no guiltiness, and therefore needed no deliverance. But what blood did he shed unlawfully ? No more did Ahab, no more did Jezebel, yet as guilty of blood as if they had shed it.² When magistrates command a thing to be done, they do it ; when a malicious person imprecates a mischief to be wrought, he works it ; when a man plots a villany to be acted, he acts it ; and in all these ways, though David actually shed no blood, yet he was as guilty of blood as if he had shed it. *Per alium* [through another] here is as much as *per se* [by oneself] ; and therefore David knew he had cause enough to say, Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God.

But is there any hope that this sin of blood may ever be remitted, seeing God hath spoken it peremptorily, He that sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed ? and can I look that God will break his word to do me a pleasure ? But is it not that God's threatening is ever with condition ? For was it not so in Nineveh ? Forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed.³ Yet forty days came, and Nineveh was not destroyed.⁴ Was it not so to Hezekiah ? Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die of this sickness. Yet Hezekiah died not of that sickness, but lived fifteen years after.⁵ I know, indeed, that the condition of God's will there, though not expressed, was yet intended. Unless they repented ; but what may be the condition of his will here ? No doubt repentance too, but with this codicil annexed : His blood shall be shed unless he can find some other that will shed his blood for him. And, alas, if this be the condition, what am I the nearer ? For where can I find out any that

¹ Rom. vi. 23. ² 1 Kings xxi. 1-14. ³ Jonah iii. 4 : "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." ⁴ Jonah iii. 20. ⁵ 2 Kings xx. 1-7.

will shed his blood for me? and if I could find one willing, where can I find one able? An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,¹ and yet a man may live; but blood for blood, and who can live, unless he be a God? An angel cannot do it, for he hath no blood to shed; a man cannot do it, for he cannot lay down his life and take it up again; thou only canst do it, who art both God and man, thou God of my salvation; for thou art the Lamb that was slain, and is alive,² and I know that my Redeemer liveth.³ And wilt thou shed thy blood for me, and not deliver me from blood? Wilt thou pay a ransom for me, and let me be a captive still? Wilt thou pay so dearly for a thing, and not take it when thou hast done? Oh deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

But why should David pray to be delivered from bloods, as the words indeed are? For seeing he shed but the blood of Uriah only, the singular number might well enough have served. Is it that the plotting of Uriah's death drew with it the deaths of many others,⁴ and so just cause of praying to be delivered from bloods? Or is it that the several respects of relation in Uriah made his blood as so many several bloods in God's account? One blood as of the husband of Bathsheba; another as of David's own subject; another as of an innocent person; another as of a faithful servant; another as of a silly lamb, that carried letters of his own death;⁵ and (which is most of all) another as of one that was venturing his life for David. But if these several respects make so many several bloods, and every blood must have a deliverance, where shall we find a deliverer of so many respects to make so many bloods to serve for deliverance? Indeed, we may look all the world over and find none such to be found, but only thou, O God, who art the God of my salvation; for in thee alone may all the like respects be found. To answer the blood of the husband of Bathsheba, here is the blood of the husband of the Church;⁶ to answer the blood of King David's subject, here is the

¹ Ex. xxi. 24. ² Rev. v. 6, i. 18. ³ Job xix. 25. ⁴ 2 Sam. xi. 17: "There fall some of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also."
⁵ 2 Sam. xi. 14, 15. ⁶ 2 Cor. xi. 2.

blood of the King of Heaven's subject ; to answer the blood of an innocent person, here is the blood of him who only could say, Which of you could reprove me for sin ?¹ to answer the blood of a faithful servant, here is the blood of him who was in the house of God more faithful than his most faithful servant Moses ;² to answer the blood of a silly lamb, that carried letters of his own death, here is the blood of him who carried our flesh of purpose to suffer death ;³ and that (which is most of all) to answer the blood of him that was then venturing his life for David, here is the blood of him that was then shedding his blood for them that shed his blood. But seeing, by this account, we find six several bloods in Uriah's shed by David, where find we six several bloods in Christ shed by him ? Indeed, just six, and no more nor less ; one blood which he sweat in the garden ;⁴ another which he shed with the stripes of the whips ;⁵ another drawn from him with the pricks of the thorns ;⁶ another which he shed on the cross with the nails in his feet ; another with the nails in his hands ;⁷ and the sixth which he shed out of his side with the point of the spear.⁸ And now that we have bloods enough to serve for deliverance, how shall we be able to apply them ? Is it not that they are all re-collected, and put into that cup of which he said, Drink ye all of this ?⁹ For the blood of this cup is that which washeth away our sins ; that which purgeth us with hyssop ; that which renews a right Spirit within us ; that which restores to us the joy of his salvation ; that which establisheth us with his free Spirit ; and, lastly, that which delivers us from bloods, that David had great cause to say, and we no less than he, Deliver me from bloods and blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

And now we may conceive a match, as it were, to be tried here between Blood and Repentance, which of them shall cry loudest and be soonest heard of God. Blood cries for vengeance,¹⁰ and God is the God of vengeance ;¹¹ Repentance

¹ John viii. 46 : "Which of you convinceth me of sin ?" ² Heb. iii. 2, 5.
³ Heb. ii. 9. ⁴ Luke xxii. 44. ⁵ Matt. xxvii. 26. ⁶ Matt. xxvii. 29. ⁷ John
xx. 25. ⁸ John xix. 34. ⁹ Matt. xxvi. 27 : "Drink ye all of it." ¹⁰ Gen.
iv. 10. ¹¹ Rom. xii. 19.

cries for mercy, and God is the God of mercy;¹ and so they seem both upon equal terms yet; but if we mark the order of God's titles, we shall find his mercy to take [precedence] of his justice: *Misericordia superexaltat judicium* [mercy exalteth judgment],² and therefore Repentance which cries for mercy shall be heard before Blood which cries for justice. But if Repentance cannot get it with crying, she will at least with singing, for she never sung till now; and now she sings, My tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness,³ where blood only cries but cannot sing; and seeing singing makes better music in God's ears than crying, Repentance shall be heard when Blood shall be put to silence. But how loud will the singing be, when not only Repentance sings, but Joy also, which is a loud singer, shall join in concert and sing with her; and if ever Joy sung, it will sing now, for what greater joy than for a bondman to be set at liberty? for a man condemned for blood, to be delivered from blood? And if no joy can be greater than this, then certainly no singing can be louder than that; but what this song is that Repentance and Joy join in comfort to sing—seeing the sweet singer of Israel⁴ hath not vouchsafed to deliver himself—it is not for any man now living to deliver it; only we may conceive that Repentance's part is *de profundis* [out of the depths],⁵ and that Joy's part is *in excelsis* [in the highest],⁶ Repentance sings the Hosanna,⁷ and Joy the Alleluia.⁸

But may we not wonder at David how he dares speak thus to God: Deliver me from blood, and my tongue shall sing of thy righteousness? as though he thought he might commit a wilful murder, and then have his pardon of God for a song; and what should his song be of?—of God's righteousness. But what righteousness is in this, to suffer a righteous person to be murdered, and then to set the murderer free? As much righteousness as this we may find in a Jew, who cried, Crucify Christ, and deliver Barabbas.⁹ But, O my soul, forbear such thoughts, or rather tremble at such blasphemies; remember first, that this song is not for

¹ Ps. cxvi. 5: "Our God is merciful." ² Vulg. "Superexaltat autem misericordia judicio"—"And mercy rejoiceth against judgment," Jas. ii. 13. ³ Ps. li. 14.
⁴ s. Sam. xxiii. 1: "The sweet psalmist of Israel." ⁵ Ps. cxiii. 1. ⁶ Luke ii. 14.
⁷ Matt. xxi. 9, 15. ⁸ Rev. xix. 1, 3, 4, 6. ⁹ Matt. xxvii. 21, 22.

getting of pardon, but for giving of thanks ; and what thanks so acceptable as that which is cheerfully spoken, and what spoken so cheerfully as that which is sung ? And then consider what God's righteousness is. He saith himself, his ways are not as our ways,¹ and may not we as well say, his righteousness is not as our righteousness ? Our righteousness is blood for blood, but God's righteousness may be a song for a murder. But then consider withal, what this song is, and how hard a thing it is to sing of God's righteousness ; the angels have enough to do to sing it ; it is their Alleluia ; and seeing the singing this Alleluia is the chiefest service of an angel, what deserves he less than an angel's place that can sing of God's righteousness ? And that we may see how transcendent a matter it is to do it, behold David here, a man far abler than any of us, yet finds himself not able so much as to open his lips towards it, but is fain to call to God for help : *O Lord, open thou my lips ; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise* [ver. 15]. Open them indeed, to bid Joab number the people,² and to entice Bathsheba to folly, I can ; but to open them to sing of thy righteousness, and to show forth thy praise, I am utterly unable, unless thou vouchsafe to open them for me. Oh then, open thou my lips, O God, for else I shall be forced to break off abruptly, and after so many great favours received be fain to go my ways without so much as saying, I thank you. But it shall never be said of David that he is so unmannerly, so ungrateful. If thou but please to open my lips, for then, as I have sung this penitential Psalm for myself, so I will sing an encomiastical hymn³ for thee, and this fiftieth Psalm,* as well as the fiftieth year, shall have its jubilee.⁴ If thou open not my lips, neither Repentance will cry, nor Joy will sing, but both will be as dumb as the devil in the gospel;⁵ but if thou open my lips, my mouth will turn organist, and I shall strive with the angels in singing their Alleluia. If I only open my lips, they will quickly

¹ Isa. lv. 8. ² 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. ³ Hymn of praise. ⁴ Lev. xxv. 9. ⁵ Mark ix. 25 : "Thou dumb and deaf spirit," etc.

* So reckoned by many of the ancients. [Author's note. This is done by the Septuagint, which joins in one Psalms ix. and x., and thus makes this Psalm l. instead of Psalm li.]

shut again, and there will not be a praise that is worthy of thee ; but if thou open them, thou openest and no man shutteth,¹ and then I shall show forth thy praise to all generations. Thy praise, but for what ? for thy washing and purging me, for thy creating in me a clean heart, and renewing a right spirit within me ; for thy restoring to me the joy of thy salvation, and for establishing me with thy free spirit ; that we may know it is no ordinary opening of lips that will serve, seeing it is not a single praise, but a whole troop of praises, that must come forth at once : I must praise thee for thy humility, that disdainest not to make me clean ; I must praise thee for thy bounty, that deniest not to make me new ; I must praise thee for thy patience, that attendest my repentance ; I must praise thee for thy graciousness, that acceptest my repentance ; and before all these, I must praise thee for thy mercy, that art willing ; I must praise thee for thy power, that art able ; I must praise thee for thy justice, that knowest why ; I must praise thee for thy wisdom, that knowest how to forgive me my sins, and to deliver me from blood ; but above all these I must praise thee for thy glory, that having made the sands of the sea, the stars of heaven, so innumerable, yet all of them put together are not counters enough to sum up thy praises.

And now I was thinking, what were fit to offer to God for all his loving-kindnesses he hath showed me ;² and I thought upon sacrifices³ [ver. 16], for they have sometimes been pleasing to him, and he hath oftentimes smelt a sweet odour from them ;⁴ but I considered that sacrifices were but shadows of things to come, and are not now in that grace they have been ; for old things are past, and new are now come ;⁵ the shadows are gone, the substances are come in place ; the bullocks that are to be sacrificed now, are our hearts ; it were easier for me to give him bullocks for sacrifice than to give him my heart ; but why should I offer him that he cares not for ? my heart, I know, he cares for ;

¹ Rev. iii. 7. ² Ps. cxvi. 12 : "What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?" ³ Ps. li. 16 : "For thou desirest not sacrifice ; else would I give it : thou delightest not in burnt offering." ⁴ Gen. viii. 22 : Exod. xxix. 18. ⁵ Rev. xxi. 4, 5 : "The former things are passed away. . . . Behold, I make all things new."

and if it be broken, and offered up by penitence and contrition, it is the only sacrifice that now he delights in¹ [ver. 17].

But can we think God to be so indifferent that he will accept of a broken heart? Is a thing that is broken good for anything? Can we drink in a broken glass, or can we lean upon a broken staff? But though other things may be the worse for breaking, yet a heart is never at the best till it be broken; for till it be broken we cannot see what is in it; till it be broken, it cannot send forth its sweetest odour;² and therefore, though God love a whole heart in affection, yet he loves a broken heart in sacrifice. And no marvel, indeed, seeing it is even he himself that breaks it; for as nothing but goat's blood can break the adamant,³ so nothing but the blood of our scapegoat, Christ Jesus, is able to break our adamantine hearts. Accept therefore, O God, my broken heart, which I offer thee with a whole heart, seeing thou canst neither except against it for being whole which is broken in sacrifice, nor except against it for being broken which is whole in affection.

But is not this to make God a cruel God, to make him delight in broken hearts, as though he took no joy but in our sorrowing, no pleasure but in our tormenting? It is true, indeed, God delights to be merciful; but yet he delights not to be merciful unjustly; and justly he cannot be merciful but where he finds repentance. And seeing repentance can never be without sorrowing, and such sorrow as even breaks the heart with sorrow, this makes the broken heart a pleasing sacrifice to God; because, as a just man's prayer ties up his hand, as it were, from doing of justice, so a sinner's repentance sets him at liberty for showing of mercy.

And now that I have prayed, and offered sacrifice for myself, shall I forget my mother Zion? For is not Zion the common mother of us all?⁴ Shall I forget the glorious city Jerusalem, whereof I am a member and a citizen? Can I prosper if my Zion suffer? Can I be safe if Jerusalem be in

¹ Pa. li. 17: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." ² Mark xiv. 3. ³ Diamond. ⁴ Gal. iv. 26.

danger? O then, *Do good, O God, in thy good pleasure to Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem* [ver. 18]. But shall I put God to so mean a work to be a builder of walls? O glorious God! what fitter work for thy almighty power? For what is it to build the walls of Jerusalem but to defend Jerusalem from her enemies? And what arm of defence hath Jerusalem to trust to against the host of her enemies but thine only, O Lord, who art the Lord of Hosts? Thou hast indeed laid a sure foundation in Jerusalem;¹ but what is a foundation if there be no walls reared? A foundation is to build upon, and to what purpose if it be not built upon? and who is able to build upon it but thou, O God, the great builder of the world, who with thy only word didst build the world? What is a vineyard if it have no hedges to fence it? No more is Jerusalem, if it have no walls to defend it; for is it not subject to all sudden surprises? lies it not open to all hostile invasions? And so we should lose the end of Zion in the midst of Zion. For what is Zion but a sanctuary for sacrifices? and how can we offer thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving for our safety if we cannot offer our sacrifices in safety, and what safety if there be no walls to defend us? Oh, therefore, build thou the walls of Jerusalem, and then, as in thy good pleasure, thou hast done a pleasure to Zion, so thou shalt smell a sweet odour, and take pleasure in Zion; for we shall offer thee *the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering*² [ver. 19], the offering of a true though imperfect righteousness, in the Jerusalem here below; and with *whole burnt offering*, the offering of a perfect righteousness, in the Jerusalem that is above; and we shall offer *bullocks upon thine altar*, sing our Alleluias upon that altar under which the saints lie now and sing their dirges; their dirge of How long, O Lord, holy and true,³ shall be changed into songs of eternal jubilee; angels and men, Christ himself, and his members, shall all cast down their crowns before thee, that thou only mayest be All in all,⁴ and that thine may be the

¹ Isa. xxviii. 16. ² Ps. li. 19: "Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifice of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering; then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar." ³ Rev. vi. 10. ⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 28.

kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen.¹

And now that we have heard the penitent David make his confession, and say his orisons; seen him make his oblations, and offer his sacrifices to God, it may not be unfit to draw an observation or two from the manner of his liturgy; and first, that this whole Psalm hath in it throughout *bimembres sententias*, verses consisting of two parts, whereof the latter is ever an augmentation of the former, as when he saith, Wash me from mine iniquity; it follows, and cleanse me from my sins, which is more than washing, and so an augmentation. When he saith, I know mine iniquity, it follows, and my sin is ever before me, which is more than knowing his sin, and so an augmentation. When he saith, Against thee only have I sinned, it follows, I have done this evil in thy sight, which is more than sinning against him, and so an augmentation. When he saith, I was born in iniquity, it follows, and in sin hath my mother conceived me, which is more than to be born in sin, and so still an augmentation; as likewise in all the rest, if we run them over, which shows the great haste that David makes in his journey of repentance; and therefore takes two paces at one stride, and climbs, as it were, two stairs at one step.

A second observation may be, that almost all the Psalm through, but most apparently in the middle verses, one deprecates the evil, and the next following obsecrates² the good. One expresseth a detestation of his sins, and the next following an application of God's mercies, like a gardener that with one hand plucks up weeds and with the other plants sweet flowers. For in saying, Purge me from my sins, he deprecates the evil, and plucks up weeds; and in the next following, Make me to hear of joy and gladness, he obsecrates the good, and plants sweet flowers. In saying, Turn away thy face from my sins, he deprecates the evil, and plucks up weeds; and in the next following, Create in me a clean heart, he obsecrates the good, and plants sweet flowers. In saying, Cast me not off from thy

¹ Matt. vi. 13.

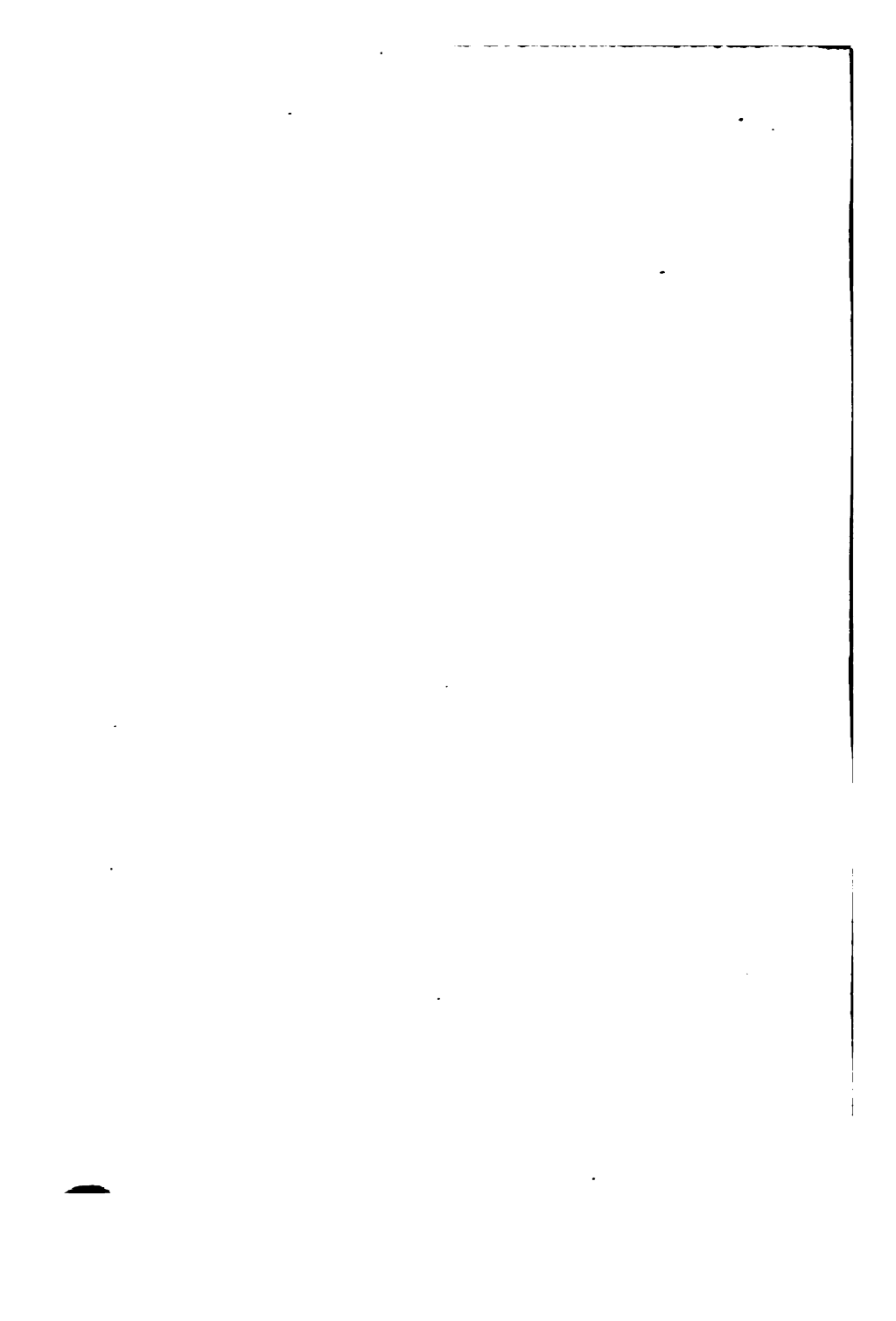
² Earnestly entreats.

presence, he deprecates the evil, and plucks up weeds ; and in saying, Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, he obsecrates the good, and plants sweet flowers. And by this he seems, as it were, to besiege God round with his petitions, and to hold him fast with both hands as Jacob did the angel,¹ that he may leave him no way to escape, and be sure not to let him go without a blessing.

Another observation may be this, that in all this Psalm David arrogateth nothing to himself but sin and misery, lying wholly at God's mercy for the remission of his sins ; and so far from any ability to satisfy for himself, that he acknowledgeth in himself an utter disability but to speak a good word, or but to think a good thought ; and indeed we may truly say that all the spirits in the arteries, all the blood in the veins of this Psalm, are but blasts and drops of the anthem² in Christ's prayer: For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen.

¹ Gen. xxxii. 26.

² Doxology.



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Hear my prayer, O LORD, and let my cry come unto thee. 2. Hide not thy face from me in the day *when* I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day *when* I call answer me speedily. 3. For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth. 4. My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread. 5. By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin. 6. I am like a pelican of the wilderness: I am like an owl of the desert. 7. I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top. 8. Mine enemies reproach me all the day; *and* they that are mad against me are sworn against me. 9. For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping, 10. Because of thine indignation and thy wrath: for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down. 11. My days *are* like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass. 12. But thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever; and thy remembrance unto all generations. 13. Thou shalt arise, *and* have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come. 14. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof. 15. So the heathen shall fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth thy glory. 16. When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory. 17. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. 18. This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD. 19. For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the LORD behold the earth; 20. To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death; 21. To declare the name of the LORD in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem; 22. When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the LORD. 23. He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days. 24. I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years *are* throughout all generations. 25. Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens *are* the work of thy hands. 26. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: 27. But thou *art* the same, and thy years shall have no end. 28. The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.—PSALM cii. (Auth. Ver.)

MEDITATIONS AND DISQUISITIONS

UPON

THE HUNDRED AND SECOND PSALM.

WHO so able to hear as he that made the ear?¹ and to whom should I appeal to hear but to him that is most able to hear? If I should go to the ear to hear, it would but send me back to him that made it; for what can any ear hear if it be not animated, O God, by thee? And therefore thou, O God, that hast made the ear, and art only able to hear, *O hear my prayer, and let my cry come unto thee*² [ver. 1].

But is praying no more pleasing a thing to God, but that we must be fain to pray him to hear our prayer? Is not a prayer a tribute due to God, and must the subject pray the prince to receive his tribute? Is not prayer a sacrifice only proper unto God, and will he not suffer the smoke of it to ascend unto him, unless we make it a suit unto him? Alas, my soul, how thou troublest thyself with vain thoughts; for what if it be no prayer unless God hear it? what if it be no tribute unless he receive it? what if no sacrifice unless he smell a sweet savour³ in it? and yet more than this, for if God do not hear it, it is not so much a prayer as an idle speech; if God do not receive it, it is not so truly a tribute as a vain expense; if God do not smell a sweet savour in it, it is not so properly a sacrifice

¹ Ps. xciv. 9. ² Ps. cii. 1: "Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come unto thee." ³ Gen. viii. 21.

as an *ignis fatuus*,¹ which gives a blaze perhaps, but makes no smoke that can ascend up to heaven. And is there not just cause then, or rather is it not a case of necessity, to say, O Lord, hear my prayer, and let my cry come unto thee? O therefore, my soul, consider rather, Is it a mean thing for God to hear thy prayer, that thou shouldst think much to pray him to hear it? Is it a mean thing for him that dwelleth in the highest heavens² to hear the prayer of thee, that are but a worm³ crawling upon the earth? Is not God the great Ruler and Governor of all things; and is it a mean thing for him, in the midst of his infinite employments, as it were, to leave them all, and to stand hearing of thee? What is man that God should be mindful of him; or the son of man that God should regard him?⁴ Hath he not made him lower than the angels,⁵ with whom he converseth, and whom he heareth continually? Lower indeed in all other things, but in this of prayer even as high as the angels; at least no more difference between them in this than is between Hosanna⁶ and Alleluia.⁷ Both excellent songs; and if the angels perhaps be tied to sing but one of them, is it not an honour to men that they be at liberty and may sing them both? and both of them indeed are allowed men to sing in that excellent prayer taught us by Christ; but the Alleluia first,⁸ as being all for God; and then the Hosanna,⁹ as being all for ourselves; and the Hosanna we are all of us ready enough to sing, to ask God for benefits. God grant we may sing the Alleluia as well, and offer him the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

But can I make any prayer to God which God doth not hear? and what need I then pray him to hear that

¹ "A fiery meteor," commonly called Will with a wisp, or Jack with a lantern, appearing chiefly in summer nights, and haunting commonly churchyards, meadows, and bogs." (Bailey's Dict.) ² 1 Kings viii. 30. ³ Job xxv. 6. ⁴ Ps. viii. 4: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" ⁵ Ps. viii. 5. ⁶ Matt. xxi. 9: "Hosanna to the Son of David." (The word means 'Save now' or 'be now propitious,' and is thus a *prayer* for mercy.) ⁷ Rev. xix. 1, cf. Ps. cvi. 1 (*et alibi*): "Praise ye the Lord." It is thus a phrase of adoration. ⁸ Matt. vi. 9: "Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven." ⁹ Matt. vi. 12-13: "Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

which I am sure he hears without my praying him to hear it? I know, O God, thou hearest the least sound that is; I know thou hearest where no sound is; but such hearing, although from thy power, hath yet in it no operation. I know thou hearest the young ravens that call upon thee;¹ but such hearing is from thy general providence, and falls but as the rain upon the just and unjust.² I know thou hearest the blood of Abel,³ but such hearing is in thy justice, and is not for my turn. The hearing that must do me good is in thy mercy; and therefore in thy mercy I humbly entreat thee to hear my prayer, and to let my cry come unto thee.

I require thee not to hear me excusing myself as Adam did: The woman which thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.⁴ I require thee not to hear me justifying myself as Saul did: I saved indeed the fat of the sheep, but it was for sacrifice.⁵ I require thee not to hear me boasting myself as the Pharisee did: Lord, I thank thee I am not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers.⁶ I require thee only to hear me humbly praying as the publican did: Lord, be merciful to me a sinner;⁷ and this prayer, I hope, thou wilt vouchsafe to hear, and to let my cry come unto thee. I know thou hearest not as men use to hear; hear a supplication, and not regard it; or hear it, perhaps, and not able to help it; but thy hearing is always with a will to grant, with a power to effect; and with this kind of hearing, with this kind hearing, I humbly entreat thee to hear my prayer, and to let my cry come unto thee.

But lest my praying should not prevail, behold, O God, I raise it to a cry; and crying, I may say, is the greatest bell in all the ring of praying; for louder than crying I cannot pray. O then, if not my prayer, at least let my cry come unto thee. But what cry?—an extension of the voice by loud speaking? Indeed, David in another place commends loudness, as an excellent circumstance in praying,

¹ Ps. cxlvii. 9. ² Matt. v. 45. ³ Gen. iv. 10. ⁴ Gen. iii. 12. ⁵ 1 Sam. xv. 15. ⁶ Luke xviii. 11: "God, I thank thee," etc. ⁷ Luke xviii. 13: "God be merciful," etc.

where he saith, Sing ye loud unto the Lord.¹ But what loudness?—a setting out the voice in the highest strain? Alas, my soul, let me leave this loudness to the priests of Baal,² who cry to their gods, that have ears, and hear not.³ My God hears the loudness of the heart, and can hear a cry in Hannah's prayer, when Eli can perceive nothing but the moving of her lips;⁴ can hear a cry in Moses' prayer,⁵ when none that stand by can perceive him to speak a word.

If I be not heard when I cry, I shall cry for not being heard; and if heard when I cry, I shall cry to be heard: and so, whether heard or not heard, I shall cry still, and God grant I may cry still, so thou be pleased, O God, to hear my prayer, and to let my cry come unto thee.

But it is not so much the loudness of my crying that thou, O God, regardest, as the humbleness and the strength; for though prayer may be with reservation, yet crying is ever with submission; though prayer may be faint and weak, yet crying is always vigorous and strong; yet as humble as it is, it must not come to thee without leave; and as strong as it is, it cannot come to thee without assistance. Oh, then, let my cry come to thee, O God; let it come both permissively and effectively; that having thy leave and thy assistance it may come to thee, not only with boldness but with assurance; with boldness, as having thy leave, and with assurance, as having thy assistance. For alas, O Lord, without thy assistance, it cannot come to thee; it will either stay grovelling about the earth with worldly desires, or hang hovering in the air with ambitious thoughts, and never be able to ascend unto thee; but if by thy grace thou be aiding to my cry, [it] will then break through the clouds, and will pierce the heavens, and nothing shall be able to hinder it from coming to thee.

But say, O my soul, what is this prayer thou art so earnest with God to hear? what, alas, but this, *Hide not thy face from me when I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me*

¹ Ps. lxxxix. 1: "Sing aloud unto God." Cf. Ps. xcix. 1, 2. ² 1 Kings xviii. 28.
³ Ps. cxv. 6. ⁴ 1 Sam. i. 12, 13. ⁵ Numb. xi. 2, xxi. 7, *et alibi*.

when I call, and answer me speedily¹ [ver. 2]. For if God hide not his face from me when I am in trouble, my troubles will hide their face, and be ashamed to appear; that either I shall be freed from them, or at least have patience given me to endure them. But if he hide his face from me, alas then I shall fall from one trouble to another; from anguish of mind to murmuring of spirit; from murmuring to repining; and whither at last but even to despair? Some others, perhaps, that were in trouble would make it no great matter whether God showed him his face or hid it from him; but I that know the blessed influence of God's face, I that know the sweet comfort that comes from the light of his countenance, I desire no greater happiness in all my troubles than this, that he will vouchsafe me the favour, not to hide his face from me.

To hide his face from me at any time must needs make a great damp in my soul; but to hide it from me when I am in trouble would make no less than a very hell within me; for if to the *pæna sensus* [sensible pain] of my being in trouble should be added the *pæna damni* [pain of loss] of hiding away his face, what greater hell could possibly be imagined? for seeing thy beautiful vision is the main object of my hope²—the hope upon which all my happiness depends—how should I be but miserable in extremity if thou, O God, shouldst turn away thy face, and hide it from me? But, O merciful God, though I cannot be truly blessed till I come truly to see thee, yet let me at least enjoy the blessedness of hope, till I come to enjoy the blessedness of fruition.

When I was in prosperity, I thought it sufficient to see thy back parts;³ but now that I am in trouble, what can give me comfort but to see thy face? and wilt thou hide it in a time when it may do most good to be seen? wilt thou hide it from me in a time when it may do me most good to see it?

But is it not a dangerous thing to pray God not to hide his face from me? Do I not run the hazard of sudden

¹ Ps. cii. 2: "Hide not thy face from me in the day *when* I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me; in the day *when* I call answer me speedily." ² 1 John iii. 2: "We shall see him as he is." ³ Exod. xxxiii. 23.

death, seeing no man shall see his face and live?¹ O my soul, God's not hiding his face brings with it an influence of grace; for from whom he hides it not, to them he shows it; and to whom he shows it, to them he gives power to be able to see it. Not, indeed, while we live here, as it is in itself, but in its effects; then only we shall be able to see it, and live, when we shall come to live by only the seeing it.

But is it not a vain request to pray God not to hide his face from me when I am in trouble, seeing it is the very hiding his face that brings all my troubles upon me? for is there any evil in the city, and God hath not done it?² and how hath he done it but by hiding his face? I know, indeed, that God's turning away his face from me is cause of my trouble; but to hide his face from me is a greater degree of aversion; for when he only turns away his face from me, I have means left to recover his sight by my turning to him; but when he hides his face from me, how can I find it? for who can find that which he is bent to hide? and until I find it, how can I see it? Oh therefore be pleased, O God, though thou turn thy face from me that it cannot be seen, yet not to hide it from me that it cannot be found; for that may be but for the present, but this is likely to continue, that may be but for a trial; but this is always for a judgment; that leaves me at least in the hands of hope, but this turns me over into the hands of despair.

But how can I hope that God will not hide his face from me when I am in trouble, seeing he hid it from his dearest Son in his greatest troubles? for what made Christ on the cross to cry, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?³ but only this, *subtraxit visionem* [he withdrew his appearing] the hiding of God's face from him? O my soul, that which Christ at that time cried, he cried for thee at this time, that thou mayest have the more confidence in crying, having Christ to cry it with thee, Hide not thy face from me, O God, when I am in trouble.

But, O gracious God, not only hide not thy face from me, but incline thine ear unto me, and answer me speedily:

¹ Exod. xxxiii. 20.

² Amos iii. 6.

³ Matt. xxvii. 46.

for thou art not as the gods of the heathen that have faces to be seen, but no ears to hear;¹ but thou, consisting of no parts, art perfect in all parts, and art as well active in hearing as passive in being seen. If thou shouldst show me thy face, and not incline thine ear unto me, it would seem as if thou tookest a dislike at me, as soon as thou sawest me; and if thou shouldst incline thine ear and not answer me, it would show thee rather to be displeased with the suit than pleased with the suitor; and if thou shouldst answer me, and not answer me speedily, it would seem as if thou didst not well understand my case, or didst not regard it. And alas, O Lord, my case requires a present remedy; a dilatory answer may be to me as prejudicial as none at all; and therefore be pleased, O God, to incline thine ear unto me, and to answer me speedily; for this is my case: *My days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth* [ver. 3]. Oh that I could as well speak it of my sins as of my days, that they are consumed like smoke; but, alas, my sins are as smoke that cannot be consumed, but will at last break out into a flame, to consume me, if thou shouldst not, O God, in thy great mercy be pleased to extinguish it.

As the smoke is a vapour proceeding from the fire, yet hath no heat in it, so my days are come from the torrid zone of youth into the region of cold and age; and as the smoke seems a thick substance for the present, but presently vanished into air, so my days made as great show, at first, as if they would never have been spent; but now, alas, are wasted, and leave me scarce a being. As the smoke is fuliginous and dark, and affords no pleasure to look upon it, so my days are all black, and in mourning,—no joy nor pleasure to be taken in them. And as the smoke ascends indeed, but by ascending wafts itself and comes to nothing, so my days are wasted in growing, are diminished in increasing; their plenty hath made a scarcity, and the more they have been, the fewer they are.

And how indeed can my days choose but be consumed

¹ Ps. cxv. 6.

as smoke, when my bones are burnt as an hearth? for as when the hearth is burnt, there can be made no more fire upon it, so when my bones which are as the hearth upon which my fire of life is made, come once to be burnt, how can any more fire of life be made upon them? and when no fire can be made, what will remain but only smoke?

But yet my heart is the first that lives, and the last that dies; and upon this string I may hope yet my life will hold a while; but, alas, *my heart is blasted and withered like grass, so that I forget to eat my bread*¹ [ver. 4]; and what life can there be when there is no nourishment? and how indeed can my heart choose but be blasted, when my bones, that are the next neighbours to it, are all on fire? And yet a blasting perhaps might have some recovery; but a withering like grass puts it past all hope; for as the grass, once withered, can by no dews nor showers of rain be ever brought to recover freshness, so the heart, once withered, can by no cordials of nature or art be ever made capable of comfort again. Other things are of themselves capable of reduction;² the water ebbs and flows again, the sun sets and riseth again; but the grass and the heart are none of this number; the grass, once withered, never flourisheth again, and the heart, once withered, never truly joys again.

The grass is blasted by the stroke of an adverse wind, and my heart is blasted by the breath of God's anger; in this they are like: the grass is withered for want of moisture, and my heart is withered for want of God's moistening grace, and in this they are like; so in blasting and withering, the grass and my heart are like; but in this they are very unlike, that the grass hath no sense, and is senseless of either, where my heart is sensible—alas, too sensible of them both.

But how can it be thought any strange matter that my heart should be withered like grass when my heart is flesh, and all flesh is grass?³ Alas, it is not strange at all, for therefore indeed is my heart withered because it was fleshly;

¹ Ps. cii. 4: "My heart is smitten and withered like grass, so that I forget to eat my bread." ² Being brought back to their pristine condition. ³ Isa. xl. 6.

for if it had been spiritual, there had been no danger of withering at all. Oh then take from me, O God, my fleshly heart, and give me a spiritual heart;¹ that though my old heart, being withered, cannot recover; yet my new heart, being fresh, may retain its freshness, and never wither.

But though it be not strange that his heart should be withered, yet this certainly is strange, that he should forget to eat his bread. I have heard of some that have forgotten their own names; but I never heard of any that forgot to eat his meat; for there is a certain prompter called hunger, that will make a man to remember his meat in spite of his teeth. And yet it is true, when the heart is blasted and withered like grass, such a forgetfulness of necessity will follow. Is it that the withering of the heart is the prime cause of sorrow, at least cause of the prime sorrow; and immoderate sorrow is the mother of stupidity, stupefying and benumbing the animal faculties, that neither the understanding nor the memory can execute their functions? Or is it that sorrow is so intensitive² to that it sorrows for that it cannot intend³ to think anything else? Or is it that nature makes account that to feed in sorrow were to feed sorrow, and therefore thinks best to forbear all eating? Or is it that, as sorrow draws moisture from the brain, and fills the eyes with water, so it draws a like juice from other parts which fills the stomach instead of meat? However it be, it shows a wonderful operation that is in sorrow, to make not only the stomach to refuse its meat, but to make the brain to forget the stomach, between whom there is so natural a sympathy, and so near a correspondence. But as the vigour of the heart breeds plenty of spirits, which, conveyed to all the parts, gives every one a natural appetite, so when the heart is blasted and withered like grass, and that there is no more any vigour in it, the spirits are presently at a stand, and then no marvel if the stomach lose its appetite, and forget to eat bread.

¹ Ezek. xi. 19.² Attentive.³ Attend.

But how should this happen, that David, a man after God's own heart,¹ should have his own heart so grievously handled as to be withered? Withered indeed to carnal appetites, but yet fresh still to heavenly desires; or rather the more fresh in these because withered in those; and therefore, though he forgot to eat his bread, the sustenance of his natural life, yet we may be sure he forgot not to eat his bread, the sustenance of his spiritual life. And was it not even so with our Saviour Christ, which made him tell his disciples he had other meat which they knew not of?² O my soul, there is in all the saints of God a hunger after righteousness³ which far exceeds all hunger after corporeal food; and what marvel then if the greater suppress the lesser, and if, longing after righteousness and forgiveness of sins, they forget sometimes to eat their bread?

Alas, O Lord, what time can I have to think of eating of bread, when my thoughts have enough to do, or, rather, all they can do is not enough to meditate of thy law,⁴ much more of thy love? to meditate of my sin, much more of thy anger? Oh, this takes away, not only all stomach from meat, but all remembrance of eating; to think of thy love, and what it hath done for me; to think of thy law, and what it requires of me; to think of my sin, and what it deserves; to think of thine anger, and what it threatens. Oh, these thoughts lie heavy upon me, and make me to groan with grief, that *with the voice of my groaning, my bones cleave to my skin*⁵ [ver. 5]. I am become a carcase rather than a body, and might serve for an anatomy without dissecting. If I did but only fast, the cheerfulness of my heart might yet make me to keep my flesh, and be instead of meat unto me; but now that to my fasting is added groaning, this leaves me nothing but skin and bone; skin, to make me sensible of pain, and bone, to make me durable in pain. My flesh, that should supply them and mediate between them, is clean wasted and gone, that I seem a creature of a strange composition, made up of extremes, without any mean between them. *I am like a pelican in the wilderness, and like an owl of the desert*⁶

¹ 1 Sam. xiii. 14. ² John iv. 32. ³ Matt. v. 6. ⁴ Ps. i. 2. ⁵ Ps. cii. 4:
"By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin." ⁶ Ps. cii. 6.

[**ver. 6**]. If I offer to go abroad, all the birds of the air and all the fowls of the field come flocking about me; they wonder at me as at a monster, and seem as if they had never seen such a thing before; and though I have more feathers upon my back than any of them, yet they will not acknowledge me for any of their kind. They disagree all amongst themselves, yet all agree in opposing of me; there is not so small a bird in the company but insults over me; they suffer me not to make apology for myself, but condemn me without hearing me speak; they cannot say I either prey upon any of them, as the hawk doth, or that I threaten any of them, as the kite doth; yet they cannot abide I should come amongst them or be of their company. I therefore shift myself from them as fast as I can; but, alas, what get I by my shifting?—a change indeed, but no abatement of my misery; for where I was before as an owl of the desert, I am now become *as a sparrow alone upon the housetop*¹

[**ver. 7**]. Oppressed before with multitude, and now with solitude; famished before with fasting, and now made a ghost with watching; a wonder before to others, and now a wonder to myself: and can any misery be greater than this, that where fasting and groaning and watching are each of them enough to breed a consumption, and to make a man miserable, I, alas! am the unhappy centre where they all meet and are joined together?

I am indeed upon the housetop; the title of my kingdom is not taken from me, but I am but as a sparrow upon the housetop; the force and dignity of it is, for I am left alone, all desolate and disconsolate; and not only forsaken of my friends, but exposed to the scandal and violence of my enemies. I am kept watching,² not more by privation of sleep than by addition of care, as being always in fear, because always in danger of their malicious practices and machinations. For *they reproach me all the day long; and they that are mad at me are sworn against me*³ [**ver. 8**]. If I be where they are, they rail at me to my face; and if I be

¹ Ps. cii. 7: "I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top." * Ps. lxxvii. 4. ² Ps. cii. 8: "Mine enemies reproach me all the day, and they that are mad against me are sworn against me."

not amongst them, they revile me behind my back ; and they do it not by starts and fits, that might give me some breathing-time, but they are spitting their poison all the day long ; and not single, and one by one, that might leave hope of resisting, but they make combinations and enter leagues against me ; and to make their leagues the stronger and less subject to dissolving, they bind themselves by oath, and take the sacrament upon it. And now sum up all these miseries and afflictions : begin with my fasting ; then take my groaning ; then add my watching ; then the shame of being wondered at in company ; then the discomfort of sitting disconsolate alone ; and, lastly, add to these the spite and malice of my enemies, and what marvel, then, if these miseries joined all together make me altogether miserable ; what marvel if I be nothing but skin and bone, when no flesh that were wise would ever stay upon a body to endure such misery ?

But though not a greater, yet I may truly say a stranger misery than any of these is still behind. *For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with tears*¹ [ver. 9]. Strange indeed in any, but most of all in David, for was not David a king ? and are ashes fit bread for a king to eat ? Yet so it is ; if kings will be sinners, they must look sometimes to fare no better. For if sin bring not such a dearth upon them, yet repentance will ; and if it be not enforced, it will at least be voluntary ; or, rather, the more it is voluntary, the more it is enforced, seeing there is no such violence as that of the will, which perhaps made Christ to say, The kingdom of heaven is taken by violence.²

But though the bread indeed be strange, yet not so strange as this, that having complained before of forgetting to eat his bread, he should now on a sudden fall to eating of ashes like bread. For had he not been better to have forgotten it still, unless it had been more worth remembering ? For there is not in nature so unfit a thing to eat as ashes : it is worse than Nebuchadnezzar's grass ;³ it is the last of all excrements, and cannot be resolved into worse or less than it is already ; that one would wonder how

¹ Ps. cii. 9 : "For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping." ² Matt. xi. 12. ³ Dan. iv. 33.

David was ever brought to eat so unnatural a thing. It is true, many in hard sieges have been constrained to eat very unnatural and loathsome things; and can any siege be harder than that with which Satan compasseth us? But this act in David here seems not so much constrained as to be voluntary, and what then could make the eating of ashes be voluntary in him? Is it that, having sinned through too much pampering his flesh, he would now eat something most improper for nourishment, lest nourishing his sinful body he should withal nourish his sinfulness, and therefore would mortify his flesh as a means thereby to mortify sin? Or is it that he therefore says, He eat ashes like bread, because, through extremity of sorrowing for his sin, his mouth was brought so out of taste that he found no more relish in bread than he should do in ashes? Or is it that where ashes are used as an external sign of humiliation, he thought it not enough for him unless he took them inwardly too? and so his eating of ashes is but feeding upon repentance, but rather indeed as Christ said, it was meat to him to do his Father's will,¹ so it was bread to David to repent in sackcloth and ashes.

And now, if you think his bread to be bad, you will find his drink to be worse, for he mingles his drink with tears; and what are tears but brinish and salt humours? And is brine a fit liquor to quench one's thirst? May we not say here the remedy is worse than the disease? for were it not better to endure any thirst than to seek to quench it with such drink? Is it not a pitiful thing to have no drink to put in the stomach but that which is drawn out of the eyes? and yet whose case is any better? No man certainly commits sin but with a design of pleasure; but sin will not be so committed; for whosoever commit sin, let them be sure at some time or other to find a thousand times more trouble about it than ever they found pleasure in it; for all sin is a kind of surfeit, and no way to keep it from being mortal but by this strict diet of eating ashes like bread, and mingling his drink with tears. O my soul, if these be works of

¹ John iv. 34: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me."

repentance in David, where shall we find a penitent in the world besides himself? To talk of repentance is obvious in every one's mouth; but where is any that eats ashes like bread, and mingles his drink with tears? Is it that we may repent as well in silk as in sackcloth, and may be as good penitents with the diet of Dives as with that of Lazarus?¹ Or is it that David was more strict in his repentance than he needed? O my soul, be not deceived; for who better knew the penitent's diet than St. Paul? yet he used himself in the like case no other bread than David's ashes, no other drink than mingled with his tears; and, indeed, without observing this diet there will be found no great good in repentance, because, to say the truth, no good repentance.

But if eating of ashes were voluntary in David, why should he complain, and reckon it amongst his miseries? For who would be willing to be miserable if he might avoid it? Indeed penitence is a penance, and penitence is voluntary, penance a misery; and so he endures a misery by choice to avoid the enduring of miseries by constraint. Oh, the hard estate of wretched man, that where nothing is miserable but that which crosses the will, he should be brought to cross his will to avoid being miserable, and have no remedy for his misery but misery; yet so it is, and so we must do; for if it be true in the body, *Dolor est medicina doloris* [Pain is pain's cure], it is no less true in the soul, the pain of penance cures the pain of sin; but this is the comfort, that the misery we endure is tolerable, where the misery we avoid is most intolerable.

These are miserable effects indeed, and yet the cause worse; the *quo* [whither, or end] is grievous, but the *unde* [whence, or origin] more; for I suffer these things *because of thine indignation, O God, and by reason of thy wrath*² [ver. 10]. Alas, O Lord, if I could suffer these miseries, if a thousand times more than these, and with them retain thy love and enjoy thy favour, not only I would suffer them with patience, but I should suffer them with comfort; but to suffer them, and with them to suffer the wrath of thy

¹ Luke xvi. 20, 21. ² Ps. cii. 10: "Because of thy indignation and thy wrath, for thou hast lifted me up and cast me down."

displeasure, this puts me into ecstasy of impatience, and makes me capable of no ease, of no hope of ease, of no means of hope, of no possibility of means, of not so much as the least degree of possibility.

For thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down. If thou hadst never lifted me up, I should never have been sensible of casting down; if I had never tasted of happiness, I should not now find in misery a grievance; but to have been lifted up, and now to be cast down, to have enjoyed thy favour, and now to feel thy displeasure, to have been happy, and now to be miserable, *Fuisse felicem miserimum est* [It is most sad to have been happy]. We that never were in Paradise think this world a pleasant living; but Adam, that was in it, though but a while, found quickly the difference between a palace and a prison. If the angels that fell¹ had never been in heaven, they would not be so sensible of their being in hell; but now the very sense of their falling from thence is itself a greater hell unto them than that which is local.

And yet the *unde*, neither, makes me not so miserable as the *per quem*, not so grievous to me *from whence* as *by whom*. No aggravation of unkindness could better be expressed than was done by him that said, *Et tu, mi fili?* [Thou too, my son?] And is it not as great an aggravation for me to say, *Et tu, mi pater?* [Thou too, my father?] Thou to cast me down, that hadst lifted me up! Thou to bring me to hide myself in a hole, who hadst raised me up to sit on a throne! Thou to be the sword to strike me, that hadst always been my buckler to defend me!²

But why, O my soul, shouldst thou take this so unkindly at God's hands? Is his lifting up a sign always of his favour? Is his casting down a token always of his anger? No, my soul, he casts down as often in his mercy as in his anger; he lifts up as often in his anger as in his mercy; both of them in his intention of equal goodness, though not to our sense of equal relish. He lifteth up often to try our humility, and he casteth down often to try our patience. And are not patience and humility good exercises both? And in

¹ Jude 6.² 2 Sam. xxii. 31.

both of them he intends our good, and therefore in both of them good cause to praise him. O merciful God, though lifting up be most pleasing, casting down most offensive to nature, yet I had infinitely rather thou shouldst cast me down in kindness than lift me up in displeasure; cast me down, and give me patience, than lift me up, and not give me humility.

Yet see the force of unkindness, but rather indeed of guiltiness, for I cannot think thee to do that in anger which my sins have provoked thine anger to do. I cannot but think thy casting me down to be a work of thy wrath, who know that the lifting me up was a fruit of thy favour. This fear of thine anger, this guiltiness of my sin, oh these are the things that have turned even Nature from her bias, and have made my soul beside itself; these are the things that have made me to eat ashes like bread, and to mingle my drink with tears. Through these it is that *my days are as a shadow that declineth*, and that *I am withered like to grass*¹ [ver. 11].

A shadow in its best estate is a thing in appearance rather than in being; but when it declines, it is an appearance that scarce appears; and such, alas, are my days: they rather seem to be than are when they are at the best; but now are so fretted with the canker of sin, and with the blast of thine anger, that they seem to have lost that very seeming. For thou, O God, art the *Antiquus dierum*, the Ancient of days,² by whose only aspect my days have their being; and how then can they choose but decline as a shadow, when thou turnest away thy face that art their substance? Alas, O Lord, my days are but as a shadow to the sun, and the sun itself but a shadow to thee; and how then can my days choose but decline as a shadow, when they are in truth but the shadow of a shadow? Thou, O God, art the *Antiquus dierum*, the Ancient of days: more ancient than days, for days were never till the sun was made, and the sun was never till the light was made. But thou, O God, art a sun³ to thyself, and wert in full brightness before—*Fiat lux* [Let there be light]⁴—any light was ever talked of. And as thou

¹ Ps. cii. 11: "My days *are* like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass." ² Dan. vii. 9. ³ Ps. lxxxiv. 11. ⁴ Gen. i. 3.

art more ancient than days, before days were, so thou art more lasting than days, when days shall be no more; for days can be no longer than there is sun, and the sun can be no longer than there are heavens; and the heavens wax old as doth a garment, and that which waxeth old must needs at last come to an end; so there will at last be an end of the heavens, and with them of the sun, and with that of the days of man. *But thou, O Lord, endurest for ever, and thy remembrance to all generations*¹ [ver. 12]. But what,—no longer than to all generations? How then can it be eternal, seeing generations continue no longer than the world continues? And who knows not that the world shall have an end, and so by this reckoning his remembrance should have an end too? But is there not an eternal generation, of which it is said, *Hodie genui te*—This day have I begotten thee,² and of whom it is said that of his kingdom there shall be no end?³ Although what need we go so high, for if we ask the Hebrews the extent of this phrase, they will tell us that to say to all generations is as much as to say to all eternity.

But what good is it to me that God's days have no shadow of declining, if my days decline as a shadow? What good to me that his remembrance be to all generations, if my heart wither, and be not durable one generation? O my soul, though my heart be withered as grass, yet God is a fountain of life,⁴ and can make a new spring in my heart at his pleasure. And as I am sure he can do it, so I am confident he will do it; for he *will arise and have mercy upon Zion*⁵ [ver. 13], and in Zion upon me as a member of Zion; for this is that precious ointment upon the head that ran down to the beard, even to Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments;⁶ and one of the skirts of Aaron's garments am I, upon whom thou wilt be pleased, O God, to pour down this precious ointment of thy mercy from the head, which is Christ.

¹ Ps. cii. 12: "But thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever, and thy remembrance unto all generations." ² Ps. ii. 7. ³ Isa. ix. 7. ⁴ Ps. xxxvi. 9: "For with thee is the fountain of life." ⁵ Ps. cii. 13: "Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yes, the set time is come." ⁶ Ps. cxxxiii. 2.

But how is it that God is said to arise? Is it to rise from sleep? but he that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps.¹ Is it to rise from being down? for he hath placed his tabernacle in the sun, and the sun indeed both riseth and goeth down; yet God is always above the highest heavens,² and how then can he be said to rise? When God meant to show his wrath upon Sodom, it is said he descended;³ but we conceive he descended not in place, but he descended from his mercy to his justice; and when he means to show his mercy, he may as well be said to rise, not at all in place, but from his justice to his mercy; or rather indeed he must then be said to rise seeing his mercy-seat is the highest part of all his ark,⁴ and no coming to it without rising: and now he is meaning to show mercy unto Zion, and therefore now he rises: *For the time to favour Zion is come, yea the set time is come.*

Zion hath been long enough under the hand of justice, long enough in affliction; it is time now to favour Zion, and to let her taste of mercy; for thou wilt not, O God, be always angry,⁵—thou wilt not make thee a mercy-seat, and then not use it. No, my soul; but God that made time knows best when to take his time; he will show mercy, but not till the time be fit to show it; he will take off his plasters, but not till the sore be healed; he will remove his judgments, but not till repentance is perfected; and the times of these things are all set down in God's decree, far more unalterable than any law of the Medes and Persians.⁶ And though there be some so foolish to think that all things happen in this inferior world by chance, or at least by the conduct of our own reason, and that God hath no hand at all in the economy⁷ and disposing of human affairs, yet it is a truth undoubted that nothing comes to pass, or is done in the world, (you would wonder I should say not the lighting of a sparrow upon the ground,)⁸ without the providence of the Almighty God.

God indeed is always merciful, yet doth not always show

¹ Ps. cxxi. 4. ² Ps. lvii. 5. ³ Gen. xviii. 20, 21. ⁴ Exod. xxv. 21. ⁵ Ps. ciii. 9: "He will not always chide." ⁶ Dan. vi. 8. ⁷ Government. ⁸ Matt. x. 29.

his mercy—not always to Zion herself; and what marvel then if not always to me, who can look for no mercy but as a member of Zion. If Zion were pure gold, and had no dross in it, then indeed it should not need the furnace; or if it were clean iron, and had no rust upon it, then it should not need the file; but seeing it is as iron that gathers rust, and as gold not thoroughly refined, no remedy now but the file and the furnace must sometimes be used; yet this file and this furnace have their prefixed time, in which it may be said, The time to favour Zion is come; yea, the set time is come. Zion was once carried into Babylon,¹ and there suffered the file and the furnace many years; but was there not a period prefixed in which it was said, The time to favour Zion is come; yea, the set time is come? But the greatest affliction that ever Zion endured was under Satan, which continued many ages; yet this captivity had a period prefixed, in which it was said, The time to favour Zion is come; yea, the set time is come. And though these set times of favouring or afflicting Zion be *inter arcana Dei* [among God's secrets], known only to God, yet God hath never kept them so secret in his bosom but that he hath afforded signs, preceding or accompanying, to make them visible, and in which it may be said, The time to favour Zion is come; yea, the set time is come; of which signs this specially one, that *thy servants, O God, take a pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof*² [ver. 14]. For was it not so in the affliction of Zion in Babylon? Did not Nehemiah and other thy servants take a pleasure in the stones of Zion, when so cheerfully they re-edified the temple of Jerusalem,³ that lay buried before in ruins and heaps of dust? Was it not so in the captivity of Zion under Satan, when the stone which the builders refused became the head-stone of the corner?⁴ And may not we ourselves at this present time hope for some favour to our Zion, seeing thy servants, O God, take a pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof? For what else doth the work show which is now in hand to re-edify the prime temple of our nation,

¹ Jer. xx. 4. ² Ps. cii. 14: "For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof." ³ Nehem. ii. 18: "They strengthened their hands for this good work." ⁴ Ps. cxviii. 22.

and I may say the glory of our Zion, that wanted little of utter demolishing and falling into dust and ruin, but that thou hast put it into the hearts of thy servants to take a pleasure in her stones, and to favour her dust?

As long as Zion is afflicted, and her stones neglected, the heathen will never believe there is any other God besides their own idols; and the kings of the earth will magnify themselves, and say, Where is God, or what is the Lord, that we should fear him?¹ But if thou vouchsafe to have mercy upon Zion, and to make thy servants have a pleasure in her stones, then will the heathen fall to scorn their idols, and will fear thy name [ver. 15];² and then will the kings of the earth leave magnifying themselves, to magnify thee and thy glorious name.

Though Zion be afflicted, and her stones neglected, yet Israelites, no doubt, will fear thy name still, for the works thou hast done in the days of their fathers and in the old time before them;³ and common people perhaps will fear thee for the fear of thy thunder and of the terrors that are seen in heaven; but if thou have mercy upon Zion, and build up the walls thereof, then both Jew and Gentile, both prince and people, will all join together to magnify thee and thy glorious name; and then it will be verified to Zion, Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers,⁴ and thy name shall be great both with great and small.

Who knows not, O God, that Zion is thy beloved, and that her stones are thy jewels? and therefore in suffering her disgrace, thou sufferest, as it were, disgrace thyself; but if thou vouchsafe to have mercy upon Zion, that her stones may be counted precious stones, and her dust sweet powder, then her honour will bring honour to thee, and in her glory thou wilt thyself appear glorious; for *When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory* [ver. 16].

But doth the building up of Zion add anything to God's glory? Was not his glory as great before the building up of Zion as it hath been since? and if as great, why not as

¹ Exod. v. 2. ² Ps. cii. 15: "So the heathen shall fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth thy glory." ³ Ps. xlii. 1. ⁴ Isa. xlix. 23.

apparent? No doubt, God is in his glory always equally, but appears not always equally. Our eyes are too dim-sighted to see his glory as it is; but to see it in his works he hath made us capable; and if in his works, then most in his most glorious work, which is Zion; and if in Zion, then most when Zion is builded up, for then in the perfection of the work we shall see the perfection of the workman, and seeing it admire him, and admiring him glorify him. When did God show his glory to Moses but then when he had given him the law, and had ordained Aaron and his sons to be his priests, which was the first visible building up of Zion? And when did Christ appear most in his glory but at his transfiguration,¹ when he had ordained his apostles and given his commandment,² which was the second visible building up of Zion? But when God shall build up Zion to the fullest height, then indeed he will appear in his glory, such as we are not able to behold, but he must be fain to put us into the cleft of a rock when it passeth by.³ Or is it that the building up of Zion adds nothing to God's glory, nor perhaps to the appearance of his glory; but his great love to Zion appears in this, that when he builds up Zion he will then be pleased to appear in his glory, the more to honour Zion?

However it be, it seems God shall gain much by building up of Zion, for he shall then appear in his glory. But what shall we ourselves get by it? O my soul, exceeding much, *For he will (then) regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer* [ver. 17]; he will then give ear to the suits of the poor, and not reject their supplications. But who will believe this? Is it likely that when God is in his glory he will intend such mean things as hearkening to the poor? Can it stand with the honour of his glory to stand reading petitions, and specially of men that come *in forma pauperis*? [pleading as paupers.] Scarce credible, indeed, with men who, raised in honour, keep a distance from the poor, and count it a degree of falling to look downwards; but credible enough with God, who counts it his glory to

¹ Matt. xvii. 2.² Matt. x. 1—42, xi. 1.³ Exod. xxxiii. 22.

regard the inglorious, and being the Most High, yet looks as low as to the lowest, and favours them most who are most despised. And this did Christ after his transfiguration, when he had appeared in his glory; he then showed acts of greatest humility; he then washed the disciples' feet,¹ and made Peter as much wonder to see his humbleness as he had done before to see his glory. In truth, humbleness is a stately virtue, and cannot be but in persons of state. A poor man may be proud, but he cannot in some sense be said to be humble; have the heart of humbleness he may, but not the face, for this is to stoop below his fortune; and let a poor man stoop as low as he can, he seems but level with his fortune still. And here we may observe that it is not the glory of God that need make us afraid, or can make us unfit to present our suits unto him ourselves, without a spokesman to present them for us, seeing the baser we are that pray, the readier he is to hear our prayers; and the more inglorious we are that appear, the more his glory appears in hearkening to us. And *This shall be written for the generation to come; and the people that shall be created shall praise the LORD* [ver. 18]. This shall be written for a memorial; not left to the unfaithful custody of words, which commonly vanish as soon as they are uttered, but be written in a book, and with the pen of a diamond,² that all people, both present and to come—all men, both created at first by thy power, and then created again by thy grace—may take notice of this graciousness in thee,—so far differing from the ways of the world,³ so far excelling the courses of men, that for this we have just cause to say, All glory, all glory and honour be unto thee, O God, who vouchsafeth to hear whom the proud world despiseth; who art pleased to regard the destitute, whom vain man leaves destitute of all regard: *for thou hast looked down from the height of thy sanctuary; from heaven, O LORD, didst thou behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner, and to loose those that are appointed to death*⁴ [ver. 19, 20]. One would think it

¹ John xiii. 5, 6. ² Jer. xvii. 1. ³ Isa. lv. 8. ⁴ Ps. cii. 19, 20: "For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the LORD behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to loose those that are appointed to death."

should be some great matter that makes God to look down from the height of his sanctuary into this vale of misery; that makes him leave the glorious objects of heaven to look upon worms that are crawling on the earth: and yet the work not so great but the motive is as small; for he looks not down as men look down into the bowels of the earth, to look for mines of gold and silver. Alas! all that moves him to look down is to hear the groaning of the prisoner, and to loose those that are appointed to death.¹ And is not this an incredible thing, that he should leave the blessed objects of heaven for the wretched objects upon earth, the height of his sanctuary for this vale of misery, the music of angels for the groaning of prisoners? But such is the wonderful love (a love never enough to be admired, never possible to be conceived)² of God towards man, that it is motive enough to draw him from one end of the world to another, if he do but hear that man is in misery, or suffers affliction; for then he neither regards the blessedness of place nor the gloriousness of persons; he neither regards the pleasing objects of his eye nor the sweet delights of his ear, but is content to forbear them all, only to come and relieve this unworthy creature—so little deserving it as not desiring it, so little thanking him for it as scarce so much as once thinking of it. And now, O my soul, say whether God's love to man, or man's ungratefulness to God, be greater?

But is man's redemption no greater a work but that it may be done by God's looking down? Is there no more ado about it but that it may be performed with a look?—with a look, indeed, as God looks, for he so looked down from heaven that he bowed the heavens and came down himself;³ he broke open the prison door,⁴ he plucked off the prisoners' chains,⁵ he left the jailor himself bound, he led captivity captive,⁶ and gave gifts unto men; and all this he did for his love to man,—if I may not rather say, all this he did for love to his mercy. As a merchant travels to the farthest parts of the world only for the love he bears to his

¹ Ps. cii. 20. ² Eph. iii. 19. ³ Ps. cxliv. 5. ⁴ Isa. xlii. 7. ⁵ Jer. xl. 4.
⁶ Eph. iv. 8.

profit, so God seems to travel from heaven to earth only for the love he bears to his mercy; for heaven is not so fit a place, the angels not so fit persons, in which, and on which, he can show his mercy at the full: it must be some miserable place that can serve for a stage, they must be some miserable persons that can serve for the subjects of showing his mercy; and what place more miserable than a prison, what persons more miserable than those that are appointed to death?

But is it so strange a matter that a look of God should effect redemption? Did he not make the world with a word, and might he not as well redeem the world with a look? Did not Christ redeem Peter with only a look, when, after his denying and forswearing, Christ's only looking back upon him made him presently to go out and to weep bitterly?¹ And why not as easily done by God's looking on us as by our looking on him?² and was it not a present cure but only to look upon the brazen serpent?³ Was not this Zacharias's prophecy? He hath visited and redeemed his people,⁴ but only visited, did but look, and redemption presently.

But to what end is all this done?—to what end hath God looked down from heaven to set man at liberty? Is it to this end, that he may revel it again as he had done before, and that he may commit new sins to deserve new chains? God forbid! it is all done to this end, that being freed from our enemies we may serve him without fear,⁵ that *we may declare his name in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem*⁶ [ver. 21]. But are Zion and Jerusalem a circuit sufficient for declaring of God's name? Alas, Zion is but a little hill, and Jerusalem but one city; and can so small an extent be capable of so great a work as praising of God's name? It is true David's Zion is but a hill, but God's Zion is the whole world; David's Jerusalem is but one city, but God's Jerusalem is heaven and earth. There was a time indeed when the declaring of God's name was confined to Zion, but that was under the law which

¹ Luke xxii. 61, 62. ² Isa. xlv. 22. ³ Numb. xxi. 9. ⁴ Luke i. 68. ⁵ Luke i. 74. ⁶ Ps. cii. 21: "To declare the name of the LORD in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem."

was given in Sinai. There was a time when the praising of God was included within Jerusalem, but that was when all sacrifices to God were to be offered only in Jerusalem; but we have now a law the sound whereof is gone out into all nations;¹ we have now a sacrifice that was slain before the foundations of the world;² and therefore now it shall no longer be said, The Lord liveth that founded Zion and built the walls of Jerusalem,³ but The Lord liveth that made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that in them is;⁴ and now the whole earth is full of the majesty of his glory,⁵ that now we may put Satan from his walk of compassing the earth,⁶ and compass it ourselves in declaring of God's name and in showing forth his praise. And oh let me never, O God, live out half my days, if I fail of this duty and perform not this service.

But see what comes of hasty vows! for while I said thus within myself, and as *the people were gathered together, and the kingdoms of the earth to serve the Lord*⁷ [ver. 22], and I preparing myself to be amongst them as if God had heard me and took me at my word, *He weakened my strength in the way*⁸ [ver. 23], and surprised me with so dangerous a sickness as if he meant to *shorten my days*, and made me to turn my note from praising him for my freedom, to pray him for my life, that *I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days*⁹ [ver. 24], spare me to fulfil my course, that I may at least have time to perform my vows unto thee. Would any traveller that hath a day's journey to go be willing to make an end of his journey at noon? and why then wilt thou make me to end my journey of life in the midst of my days, which is but the noon of my life? Alas, O Lord, I have spent all the forenoon of my life so idly, or rather so illy,¹⁰ that I now desire to live in hope to make a better afternoon's work. But why should David do this? for who knows not that the latter part of life is always the worst? for then

¹ Matt. xxiv. 14: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached to all nations."
² Rev. xiii. 8. ³ Isa. xiv. 32. ⁴ Exod. xx. 11. ⁵ Ps. lxxii. 19. ⁶ Job i. 7.
⁷ Ps. cii. 22: "When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms to serve the Lord."
⁸ Ps. cii. 23: "He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days."
⁹ Ps. cii. 24: "I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years are throughout all generations."
¹⁰ Wickedly.

subveniunt morbi et tristis senectus [diseases come and sad old age], worst indeed for the body, but best for the soul. For in the cold of this age comes the fire of devotion to be made in the heart; all the forepart of life is commonly spent in the fire of concupiscence, and all that time there is no room in the heart for the fire of devotion; for the heart, God knows, is too small a hearth to have two fires made upon it at once. And therefore, O God, take me not away in the midst of my days, that the fire of concupiscence being first quenched in me, I may live to have the fire of devotion kindled in my heart before I die.

But how can one be taken away in the midst of his days, seeing whensoever he is taken away it is the end of his days? Hath man any more days to reckon his than God is pleased to allow him? But is it not that David speaks according to the natural proportion of men's living, of which in another place he saith, The years of man are threescore and ten;¹ and so many indeed did David live, and by that is said here may seem at this time to have been about the midst of those years? Or was it that he calls it the midst of his days because as in the midst of the day is the greatest heat, so he was now perhaps in the greatest heat of his sin? And in this sense indeed he had just cause to pray to God not to take him away in the midst of his days. For what were this but as if God should take advantage of his sins against him, and take him away when he were most of all out of the way, and most unfit to be taken away? But is this good manners in David to appoint God the time when he should take him away, as though God knew not the fittest time when to take him away himself? O my soul, it is not so meant; but David, knowing his days to be always in the hands of God, but his repentance not always in his own hands, he humbly prays God not to take him away in the midst of his days, but in his great mercy to afford him a longer time of repentance; and yet this neither not so much for his own good as for God's glory; for what glory can a workman have if he leave his work imperfect? and will he not leave it imperfect if he take him away in the

¹ Ps. xc. 10.

midst of his days, which is the midst of his work? If he take him away then, he may perhaps take away Saul a persecutor, where, if he left him to finish out his days, he might take him away Paul a martyr. Oh how happy are they who in the midst of their days can make an end of their days, and who make no distinction of their days by beginning or middle, but count every day the ending! For if it be one of the greatest follies in man that *semper incipit vivere* [he is always beginning to live], certainly it is one of the greatest wisdoms in man that *semper incipit mori* [he is always beginning to die]; for then, at what time of his days soever it shall please God to take him away, it can never be said he is taken away in the midst of his days.

The shortest time to the longest time hath some proportion; for the shortest time multiplied will come at last to make the longest time: but the longest time to eternity hath no proportion; for, multiplied never so often, it can never come to be eternal; and that which hath no proportion to a thing is to that thing as nothing; and thus my days, though they were as many as the days of Methuselah, yet to thee, O God, that art eternal, would be as nothing. And, alas then, O Lord, what is the living out my days to thee who livest for ever? My life is but a life of days, and of days that decline as a shadow; but thy life is a life of years, and of years that endure throughout all generations.

Nor is it any immortality of this body of mine, in the state I am now in, that I desire; for then I should desire to have more than the earth and the heavens themselves have; for the earth is of an old date indeed, and the foundation of it laid by thee¹ [ver. 25], who usest to lay no weak foundations; yet it shall not always continue. And the heavens are the work of thy hands, which are wont to make strong work indeed; yet it shall not always endure. Nothing but thyself is so lasting, to be everlasting. They all shall perish² [ver. 26], though not absolutely, yet wax old as a garment; and then, as thy wardrobe is not without change

¹ Ps. cii. 25: "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the works of thy hands." ² Ps. cii. 26: "They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed."

of garments, they shall at last be changed ; and according to the condition of changing garments, a better shall be had for a worse : but whether the stuff itself, or but the fashion only, shall be changed, is a depth I dare not dive into ; yet this perhaps we may conceive, that seeing our bodies shall be raised up spiritual bodies,¹ there shall, no doubt, be such heavens, and such an earth, as is most proportionable for receiving of such bodies : *Thou only, O God, art always the same*² [ver. 27], and no change nor shadow of change in thee at all ; thou only art perfect, and canst not be bettered ; thou only eternal, and canst not be impaired ; thou only one alone, and canst not be changed ; and therefore of thee only, and of thy glory, it can be truly said, As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

It is a decree from the beginning, *Statutum est omnibus semel mori* [It is appointed unto men once to die].³ Doomsday reacheth to all ; not only all men, but all creatures under heaven and earth, man and beast ; the earth and the heavens themselves, all subject to this doom of dying, at least of ending, which is a dying in their kind. And now, O my soul, shall I be so greedy of life as that it should trouble me, *Mundo mecum percunte mori*,—to die when the world itself dies ? Alas, I desire not to live for the world's sake, which I know must die as well as myself : I desire to live for his sake who lives for ever. If God were subject to ending, as the world is, I should no more desire to live for his sake than now I do for the world's sake ; but seeing his remembrance is to all generations, and of his kingdom there shall be no end, this makes me I cannot choose but say with Peter, *Bonum est esse hic*,—it is good staying here with God,⁴ so good, as nothing good without it, nothing good besides it ; all things else, not only vanity, because they must end, but worse than vanity, because vexation of spirit.

And I cannot think this desire of mine displeasing to God, seeing he seems to second me in desiring as much himself ; for why else would he make the *children of his servants to*

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 44. ² Ps. cii. 27 : " But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." ³ Heb. ix. 27. ⁴ Matt. xvii. 4.

*continue, and their seed to be established before him ?*¹ [ver. 28.] Why should he promise perpetuity to their seed, if it were not good that he should, if he thought it not good, that he would perform it?

But why to the children of his servants? O my soul, was it said, The father did eat sour grapes, and the children's teeth were set on edge;² and shall it not as well be said, The fathers did the service, and the children receive the wages? and what! the fathers that did the service to receive none? Yes, my soul, so bountiful a master is God, that his wages are not only personal, but continued to posterity. Did Ham see his father's nakedness, and Canaan was cursed;³ and shall Abraham sacrifice his son, and not his seed be blessed?⁴ But then they must be children, not so much by generation as by imitation; not so much from their loins, as from their lines and lessons; and more than this perhaps, for though they can do no work, yet they shall have wages *in fide parentum* [on the security, or under the guardianship, of their parents]. And this wages continued not to the children of one generation, but God sheweth this mercy to thousand generations of them that love him, and keep his commandments:⁵ and lest a thousand generations should be thought too little, here is an enlarging of their patent: Their seed shall be established before God; and what is this but to be for ever?

Oh the folly of the world, that seeks to make perpetuities to their houses by devises in the law which may perhaps reach to continue their estates, but can it reach to continue their seed? It may entail lands to their heirs, but can it entail heirs to their lands? No, God knows, this is a perpetuity of only God's making, a privilege of only God's servants: for the children of his servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before him; but that any others shall continue, is no part of David's warrant.

¹ Ps. cii. 28: "The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee." ² Jer. xxxi. 29. ³ Gen. ix. 22-27. ⁴ Gen. xii. 15-18. ⁵ Exod. xx. 6.

Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD. 2. Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. 3. If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? 4. But *there is* forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. 5. I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. 6. My soul *waiteth* for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: *I say, more than* they that watch for the morning. 7. Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD *there is* mercy, and with him *is* plenteous redemption. 8. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.—PSALM cxxx. (Auth. Ver.)

MEDITATIONS AND DISQUISITIONS

UPON THE

HUNDRED AND THIRTIETH PSALM.

WHO would think but it were Jonah that is speaking here?¹ [ver. 1], for he indeed was in one depth in the whale's belly, and in another depth in the bottom of the sea, and might therefore justly have said, *Out of the depths have I cried to thee, O God.*² But what is this, my soul, to David or to thee? for neither he was, nor thou, God be thanked, art in either of these depths; and what depths, then, for either him or thee out of which to cry to God? But is there not a depth of sin, and a depth of misery by reason of sin, and a depth of sorrow by reason of misery? In all which, both David was, and I, God help me, am deeply plunged; and are not these depths enough out of which to cry? And yet, perhaps, none of these depths that David means; but there are depths of danger—a danger of body and a danger of soul, and out of these it seems that David cried; for the danger of his body was so deep that it had brought him to death's door, and the danger of his soul so deep that it had almost brought him to the gates of despair; and had he not just cause then to say, *Out of the depths have I cried to thee, O God?* And yet there is a depth besides these that must help to lift us out of these—a depth of devotion; without which depth our crying out of other depths will never be heard. For devotion is a fire that puts a

¹ Jonah i. 15—17. Ps. cxxx. 1: "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD."

heat into our crying, and carries it up into *cælum empyræum*—the heaven of fire, where God himself is.¹ And now join all these depths together—the depth of sin, of misery, of sorrow, the depth of danger, and the depth of devotion,—and then tell me if David had not, if I have not, as just cause as ever Jonah had to say, Out of the depths have I cried to thee, O God.

Indeed, to cry out of the depths hath many considerable circumstances to move God to hear : it acknowledgeth his infinite power when no distance can hinder his assistance ; it presents our own faith when no extremity can weaken our hope ; it magnifies God's goodness when he, the Most High, regards the most low ; it expresseth our own earnestness, seeing crying out of depths must needs be a deep cry ; and if each of these single be motive sufficient to move God to hear, how strong must the motive needs be when they are all united ? and united they are all in crying out of the depths ; and therefore now that I cry to thee out of the depths, be moved, O God, in thy great mercy be moved to *hear my voice* ² [ver. 2].

It is cause enough for God not to hear some because they do not cry—cause enough not to hear some that cry because not out of the depths ; but when crying and out of the depths are joined together, it was never known that ever God refused to hear ; and therefore now that I cry to thee out of the depths, be pleased, O God, in thy great mercy be pleased to hear my voice.

But could David, being in such depths, find no fitter body to cry to than to cry to God, who is in such a height ? Might he not better for the danger of his body have cried to his physician, and for the danger of his soul to his ghostly father, who were near about him, than to cry to God who was so far off ? O my soul, if God be far off,³ who can be near that is able to help ? what strength is in the arm of man,⁴ if God's hand be not joined to it ? God may be pleased, and often-

¹ 1 Tim. vi. 16. ² Ps. cxxx. 2 : "Lord, hear my voice : let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications." ³ Ps. xxii. 1 : My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? *why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring ?*

⁴ Jer. xvii. 5 : "Cursed be the man that . . . maketh flesh his arm." Cf. Ps. cxxvii. 1.

times is, to use these for his instruments ; but if God's hand be not the first mover, and set them a-working, alas, of themselves they are altogether inactive, and of no operation. And therefore out of the depths have I cried to thee, O Lord—to thee and to no other : Lord, hear my voice. I doubt not of thy power to hear my voice, who I know art able to hear my silence ; I only doubt of thy will, Seeing thou doest whatsoever thou wilt in heaven and in earth ;¹ and I doubt not of thy will neither to hear prayer, seeing prayer is the most acceptable sacrifice that can be offered to thee ;² I doubt only of thy will to hear my prayer, seeing I am one of polluted lips, and thou endurest nothing that is unclean. Yet I have some hope in my heart, seeing thou lovest the heart ; and my prayer coming from thence, I may hope at least that for my heart's sake thou wilt be gracious to me and hear my prayer. But, alas, my heart is not cleaner than my lips ; or rather, it is the uncleanness of my heart that makes my lips polluted ; and what hope, then, of thy hearing my prayer, when my lips that deliver it, and my heart that sends it, are both of them unclean ? And art thou not now, O my soul, in a greater depth than ever Jonah was ? a depth out of which thou canst never be heard cry, unless thou call to heaven for another depth to help thee. That *abyssus* may *abyssum vocare*, one depth may call upon another ;³ for heaven hath its depth too ; as it is said, *cælumque profundum*—the depth of God's mercy. And this is the depth that only can make our cry to be heard out of all other depths ; and therefore out of this depth of thy mercy be pleased, O God, to incline thine ear and to hear my voice. But when thou hearest my voice, O hear it not as thou didst see Cain's sacrifice—see it and not regard it, hear it and not attend it ;⁴ but let thy ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication, for then I know thou canst not but commiserate my estate, for the voice of my supplication is an humble voice, and thou givest grace to the humble ;⁵ it is a complaining voice, and thou art pitiful

¹ Ps. cxxxv. 6 : "Whatsoever the LORD pleased, *that* did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places." Ps. cxvi. 17 : "I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD." Cf. Ps. l. 14.

² Ps. xlii. 7. ³ Gen. iv. 3—5. ⁴ Jas. iv. 6.

to men in misery ;¹ it is a groaning voice, and thou delightest in a contrite heart.² Oh, therefore, Let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication, but let not thine eyes be intente³ to the stains of my sin ; for *If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who should stand* [ver. 3], or who should be able to abide it ?⁴ Did not the angels fall when thou markedst their follies ?⁵ Can flesh, which is but dust,⁶ be clean before thee, when the stars, which are of a far purer substance, are not ?⁷ Can anything be clean in thy sight which is not as clean as thy sight ? and can any cleanness be equal to thine ? Alas, O Lord, we are neither angels nor stars, and how then can we stand when those fell ?⁸ how can we be clean when these be impure ? If thou shouldst mark what is done amiss, there would be marking-work enough for thee as long as the world lasts ; for almost what action of man is free, if [not] from stain of sin, at least from defect of righteousness ? Oh therefore mark not anything in me, O God, that I have done, but mark that only in me which thou hast done thyself ; mark in me thine own image ; and then thou mayest look upon me, and yet say still, as once thou saidst, *Et erant omnia valde bona* [And all things were very good].⁹

But how vain is this thought, as though God, who sees all things, should not see sins ; or as though sins were such slight things with him that he could pass them over, and not mark them ! Is there inadvertency or connivance in God, that either he should not see iniquities, or, seeing them, should not observe them, or, observing them, should wink at them ? Alas, my soul, I desire not that his eye, which seeth all things, should not see them ; I desire not that his wisdom, which observeth all things, should not observe them : I only desire that his justice, which censures all things, should not censure them ; for his censuring is the marking that I am afraid of ; and if of this marking, O God, thou wilt be pleased to excuse me, neither thy

¹ Jas. v. 11. ² Ps. li. 17 : "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." ³ Intent, or closely bent upon. ⁴ Vulg., "Quis sustinebit," who shall bear it. ⁵ Job iv. 18 : "His angels he charged with folly." ⁶ Ps. ciii. 14. ⁷ Job xv. 15 : "The heavens are not clean in his sight." ⁸ Jude 6 ; Rev. vi. 13. ⁹ Gen. i. 31.

seeing my iniquities with thy all-seeing eye, nor thy observing them with thy all-knowing wisdom, shall ever hurt me.

It seems we do not stand, but because God doth not mark; for if he should mark what is done amiss, who were able to stand? and therefore our standing is not by any affirmative in ourselves, but only by a negative in God. He marks not our falls, and, not marking them, imputes them not;¹ and our falls not imputed, we are reputed to stand. Oh, then, deny me not this negative, O God, not to mark what I do amiss; or, if needs it must be an affirmative, let it be in him of whom thou hast affirmed that in him thou art well pleased.²

But if God should not mark what we do amiss, we indeed should stand; but then his fear would fall, for who would fear him that marks not what we do? O my soul, his mercy will supply that fear; for his not marking is out of his mercy: and *there is mercy with him, that he may be feared*³ [ver. 4]. O blessed mercy, that preserves the fear that is due to God's justice, and yet keeps iniquities from being marked by his justice. O happy fear, that stands more in awe of God's mercy than of his justice; and is more exercised in not committing of sins than in considering the punishment that is due to our sins.

But is this not a mistaking in David to say, There is mercy with God, that he may be feared; all as one to say, There is severity with him, that he may be loved? for if we cannot love one for being severe, how should we fear him for being merciful? Should it not, therefore, have been rather said, There is justice with thee, that thou mayest be feared? seeing it is justice that strikes a terror and keeps in awe; mercy breeds a boldness, and boldness cannot stand with fear, and therefore not fear with mercy. But is there not, I may say, an active fear, not to offend God, as well as a passive fear for having offended him? and with God's mercy may well stand the active fear, though not so well, perhaps, the passive fear, which is incident properly to his justice.

¹ 2 Cor. v. 19. ² Mark i. 11. ³ Ps. cxxx. 3: "But *there is* forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared."

There is a common error in the world, to think we may be the bolder to sin because God is merciful ; but, O my soul, take heed of this error, for God's mercy is to no such purpose ; it is not to make us bold, but to make us fear : the greater his mercy is, the greater ought our fear to be, for there is mercy with him that he may be feared ; that unless we fear, he may choose whether he will be merciful or no ; or rather, we may be sure he will not be merciful, seeing he hath mercy for none but for them that fear him ;¹ and great reason, for to whom should mercy show itself but to them that need it ? and if we think we need it, we will certainly fear. Oh, therefore, most gracious God, make me to fear thee, that thou mayest be merciful to me ; but rather, be merciful to me that I may fear thee, for as thou wilt not be merciful to me unless I fear thee, so I cannot fear thee unless thou first be merciful to me.

Indeed mercy, I may say, keeps state, and hath fear attendant upon her—to say truly, more than justice, for fear would never wait upon justice if it were not for punishment, where it waits upon mercy for very love. The fear that attends justice is a servile fear, and waits not but constrained, and as it were in chains ; the free and noble fear is never seen waiting but upon mercy, for mercy breeds reverence, where the rigour of justice breeds but stubbornness ; and if justice perhaps have the knee of fear, yet none but mercy hath her heart. Neither yet is mercy so at a beck, and so easily won, as some perhaps imagine. He had need go warily to work that gets her favour ; for if he presume, she never looks towards him ; and if he despair, she turns her face from him : and must there not needs be fear when there is such caution ? Did mercy ever show itself but to the penitent ? and can there be repentance where there is no fear ? And indeed what should I fear but that which can forgive—which justice cannot do, only mercy can ; and therefore most justly is it said of David here, There is mercy with thee, that thou mayest be feared ; because there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest

¹ Luke i. 50 : " And his mercy is on them that fear him."

show mercy. And yet, O gracious God, I cannot so well say I fear thy mercy as I fear thee for thy mercy, because I love thee for thy mercy; for love is never without fear: *Res est solliciti plena timoris amor* [Love is a thing that is full of anxious fear].

This waiting of fear upon mercy, makes me, O God, to wait upon thee; and therefore, *I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope* [ver. 5]. If there were not mercy with God, to what end should I wait upon him? for after all the service I could do, to the uttermost of my power, a small error at last might, for want of mercy, overthrow it all. But God is no such master, for there is mercy with him, and specially towards his servants that wait upon him. He will wink at faults in a servant that he would never bear at a stranger's hands: it is cause enough for him to pardon my faults, that I am his servant and wait upon him. And yet I cannot more say I wait upon him than I wait for him. Nothing but himself can be object sufficient to satisfy my soul; my base body perhaps would wait upon him, for the pleasures of the flesh, or for the glory of the world; but my soul is too noble to have such mean designs: it waits for himself, and for nothing but himself; for how should it but wait for him, that came at first from him; how wait for anything besides him, when all things else are nothing without him?

And it waits not for him without hope, nor without good ground of hope, for in his word do I hope—his word a more certain ground than the ground I go upon; and have I not his word for the ground of my hope—for the hope of my waiting? Did he not give his word to Abraham, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed?¹ And what do I wait for but this seed? Did he not give his word to Moses that he would raise up a prophet like to him,² who, as he delivered the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt, should deliver all true Israelites from the bondage of Satan? And whom do I wait for but this Prophet? Oh, then, my soul, seeing thy hope is so

¹ Gen. xii. 3.² Deut. xviii. 15.

certain, let thy hope be certain; possess thyself in patience,¹ and let no troubles of the world disquiet thee; let no fears of the flesh dismay thee, for thou hast the word of God, a sure anchor, to hold by; and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry,² that thou mayest be sure thy waiting cannot be long; but how long soever, never be frustrate.

And now, O my soul, what do I live for but only to wait upon God, and to wait for God? To wait upon him, to do him service, and to wait for him, to be enabled to do him better service; to wait upon him, as being Lord of all; and to wait for him, as being the rewarder of all; to wait upon him whose service is better than any other command, and to wait for him whose expectation is better than any other possession. Let others, therefore, wait upon the world, for the world; I, O God, will wait upon thee, for thee, seeing I find more true contentment in this waiting than all the world can give me in enjoying; for how can I doubt of receiving reward by my waiting for thee when my waiting for thee is itself the reward of my waiting upon thee? And therefore my soul waiteth; for if my soul did not wait, what were my waiting worth? no more than I were worth myself, if I had not a soul; but my soul puts a life into my waiting, and makes it become a living sacrifice. Alas, my frail body is very unfit to make a waiter: it rather needs to be waited upon itself: it must have so much resting, so often leave to be excused from waiting, that if God should have no other waiters than bodies, he would be left oftentimes to wait upon himself: but my soul is *Divina particula auræ* [a portion of the Divine breath], endued with all qualities fit for a waiter; and hath it not received its abilities, O God, from thee? and to whom then should it address its waiting but only to thee? And therefore my soul waiteth, and is so intente in the service that it waits *more than they that watch for the morning*³ [ver. 6].

It may seem scarce credible that any waiting should be more intente than theirs that watch for the morning, who

¹ Luke xxi. 19. ² Hab. ii. 3; Heb. x. 37. ³ Ps. cxxx. 6: "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say more than they that watch for the morning."

not only suffer not their eyes to sleep, but not their eyelids to slumber; ¹ whose ears are listening to every voice of the cock, and of the clock; whose eyes keep continual sentinel about the east, to mark if but any dawning of day may be perceived; and most of all seeing they then watch when it is the heaviest time of all to sleep; yet as intente as their watching is, it seems David is much troubled there should be any comparison made between his watching and theirs; and therefore he doubles his assertion. I say more than they that watch for the morning, for must there not be a proportion between the cause and the effect? If my cause of watching be more than theirs, shall not my watching be more than theirs? They that watch for the morning have good cause, no doubt, to watch for it, that it may bring them the light of day; but have not I more cause to watch, who wait for the light that lighteth every one that comes into the world? ² They that watch for the morning wait but for the rising of the sun to free them from darkness, that hinders their sight; but I wait for the rising of the Sun of Righteousness ³ to dispel the horrors of darkness that affright my soul. They watch for the morning that they may have light to walk by; but I wait for the Dayspring from on high, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace. ⁴ But though there may be question made of the intente⁵ of our watching, yet of the extensiveness⁶ there can be none, for they that watch for the morning watch at most but a piece of a night; but I have watched whole days and whole nights, and may I not then justly say, I wait more than they that watch for the morning?

But what means David to stand magnifying his own watching so much, as if there were none that watched but he; and to talk so much of his hope in God, and not to tell any cause of his hope? Is it, that with overwatching himself, he forgets what he is saying? No, my soul, for he is now about to tell the cause of his watching; and whom this hope concerns, as well as himself: *Let Israel hope in the*

¹ Ps. cxxxii. 4. ² John i. 9.
fixedness. ³ Extent, duration.

⁴ Mal. iv. 2.

⁵ Luke i. 79.

⁶ Intensity,

LORD, for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption [ver. 7]. But what cause of hoping in the Lord can this be to Israel, that with God there is mercy, seeing the mercy that is with God is that he may be feared? Can Israel hope when Israel must fear? O my soul, if Israel had not feared, Israel could not hope; but now that Israel hath feared, now Israel may hope; for as the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,¹ so hope in the Lord is the progress; but no progress in wisdom but from this beginning; and as mercy in God was just cause before to fear, so the same mercy in God is just encouragement now to hope; and he is no true Israelite that confesses not with me that the meditation of God's mercy, and of his plenteous redemption, is the sole anchor of his hope,² the whole cordial of his comfort, in all tempests of temptations, in all afflictions of his troubled soul. When I think upon my sins, how numerous, how ponderous they are, that with their multitude overwhelm me with their weight, press me down to the gates of despair, oh then what an anchor of hope it is to remember that with God there is mercy and plenteous redemption! When I think upon the agonies of death, which I know I must suffer, when upon the horrors of hell, which I have deserved to suffer, oh then what a cordial of comfort it is to consider that with God there is mercy and plenteous redemption! When I think upon the loss of Paradise, and how happy we might have been if we had not sinned, how wretched we are now by having sinned, oh what a joy I take in meditation of this, that in mercy he sent his Son to restore that was lost,³ and that with him there is plenteous redemption! But what! so plenteous as though God kept open house of redemption, that every one, though continuing in his sins, may come and take it at his pleasure? No, my soul; but this redemption is solemnized at the marriage of the Lamb, and none comes there without a wedding garment;⁴ and this wedding garment is a firm hope in God, a steadfast faith in Christ, that whosoever comes in this garment is very like, or rather he may be sure,

¹ Job xxviii. 28; Prov. i. 7. ² Heb. vi. 19. ³ Luke xix. 10. ⁴ Matt. xxii. 11.

to be admitted and be made partaker of it ; but without this wedding garment, no admittance.

But when it is said, It shall be easier for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for some other,¹ is not this a mercy to Sodom and Gomorrha ? and if God's mercy be no more than so, it seems we may do ill enough, for all his mercy ? But is it not that this is a qualifying indeed of the rigour of God's justice, but not properly a mercy ; or, if a mercy (because God's mercy is over all his works²) yet not a mercy that hath fellowship with redemption, and then farthest of all from a plenteous redemption. For this plenteous redemption leaves behind it no more relics of sin than Moses left hoofs of beasts behind him in Egypt.³ It redeems not only from the fault, but from the punishment and in the punishment ; not only a *tanto*, but a *toto* [not only from such, but also from all (sin and penalty)] ; not only from the sense but from the fear of pain ; and in the fault, not only from the guilt, but from the stain ; not only from being censured, but from being questioned. Or is it meant by a plenteous redemption that not only he leads captivity captive, but gives gifts unto men ?⁴ For what good is it to a prisoner to have his pardon, if he be kept in prison still for not paying his fees ? but if the prince, together with the pardon, send also a largess,⁵ that may maintain him when he is set at liberty, this, indeed, is a plenteous redemption ; and such is the redemption that God's mercy procures unto us. It not only delivers us from a dungeon, but puts us in possession of a palace ; it not only frees us from eating bread in the sweat of our brows,⁶ but it restores us to Paradise,⁷ where all fruits are growing of their own accord ; it not only clears us from being captives, but endears us to be children ; and not only children, but heirs ; and not only heirs, but coheirs with Christ ;⁸ and who can deny this to be a plenteous redemption ? Or is it said a plenteous redemption in regard of the price that was paid to redeem us ? for we are redeemed with a price, not of gold or precious stones, but with the precious blood of the Lamb slain before the

¹ Matt. x. 15. ² Ps. cxlv. 9. ³ Exod. x. 26. ⁴ Eph. iv. 8. ⁵ A free gift, dole, present (Bailey's Dict.) ⁶ Gen. iii. 19. ⁷ Rev. ii. 7. ⁸ Gal. iv. 7.

foundation of the world.¹ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son² to be a ransom for us ; and this I am sure is a plenteous redemption.

But how may this redemption be obtained?—how, my soul, but by being a true Israelite, by putting thy trust and hoping in God?—for if thou canst be plenteous in this hope, thou mayest be sure of this plenteous redemption, and God will never mark thy iniquities, nor impute thy sins unto thee.

But is hoping in God so scarce a commodity that I may not have of it as much as I list, and be plenteous in hoping as God is in redeeming? O my soul, take heed of presuming: I doubt lest I may find thee another Peter—talk what wonders thou wilt do, while there is no danger, but when it comes to the trial be frightened with a question,³ and blown away from thy hope with less breath than a feather. For say God should deal with thee as he did with Job, take away all thy children at a blow, all thy goods at once,⁴ wouldst thou continue to hope in God still? But say he should visit thee with boils and botches all thy body over,⁵ and make thee a laughingstock to thine enemies, a loathing to thy friends, wouldst thou continue to hope in God still? But say he should give leave to have thy body be burnt, thy flesh torn in pieces, and thy bones to be racked, wouldst thou yet continue to hope in God still? Let me then try thee another way: say thou shouldst see Christ apprehended by the soldiers, beaten and buffeted by the people, judged and condemned by the high priests,⁶ wouldst thou continue to hope in Christ still? But say thou shouldst see him hanging on the cross, crying out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?⁷ and in that agony giving up the ghost,⁸ wouldst thou yet continue to hope in Christ still? O my soul, if thou canst do this I shall then say thou art a true Israelite indeed, but rather thou shalt hear Christ say, as he said to the centurion, I have not found such faith, no, not in Israel.⁹ O blessed hope, the

¹ Rev. xiii. 8. ² John iii. 16 ; Rom. viii. 32 ; 1 John iv. 10. ³ Luke xxii. 57
—60. ⁴ Job i. 13—19. ⁵ Job ii. 7. ⁶ Mark xv. 15—26. ⁷ Mark xv. 34 ;
Ps. xxii. 1. ⁸ Matt. xxvii. 50. ⁹ Matt. viii. 10.

anchor of faith,¹ the ark of Noah,² the dove that bringeth the olive-branch of peace,³ the porter of the keys of Paradise, and the ladder of Jacob by which we climb up into heaven.⁴

But what good is it to Israel that with God there is redemption, if Israel be not able to pay the ransom? what good to me that there is redemption to be had, if I have not wherewithal to have it, nor means to come by it? O my soul, let Israel hope in the Lord, and the *Lord shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities*⁶ [ver. 8]. Israel shall need but to hope; and as for the ransom, he that provided a ram for Abraham to offer, instead, of his son Isaac,⁶ he will look to that himself, he will be our purveyor for the ransom; O my soul, the ransom himself.

No cause can be more forcible to produce an effect then mercy is a motive forcible to breed hope; and seeing there is in God not only mercy but plenteous redemption, oh let not Israel be so unworthy to hinder hope from waiting upon mercy, and to keep them asunder whom God would have to be joined together; for though God's mercy be a forcible motive to move hope, yet it moves it not, but *mediante Israele* [by Israel's means]. It lies much in the hand of Israel whether he will hope or no; oh, then, let not Israel be either so wilful to cross God's motive, or so fearful to distrust it. Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with him there is mercy and plenteous redemption.

But though there be mercy with God, and hope in Israel, must it necessarily follow that God will redeem Israel? O my soul, as necessarily as any effect doth follow the cause; for though hope in Israel be not a cause, but only a motive, for God to redeem, yet it is a motive that seems in operation to have the place of a cause, but a cause only *mediante misericordia Dei* [by God's mercy]; for as mercy in God moves not Israel to hope, but *mediante Israele*, so hope in Israel moves not God to redeem, but *mediante misericordia Dei*, of the mere mercy and goodness of God, but when mercy

¹ Heb. vi. 19. ² Gen. vi. 14. ³ Gen. viii. 11. ⁴ Gen. xxviii. 12. ⁵ Ps. cxxx. 8: "And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities." ⁶ Gen. xxii. 13.

in God and hope in Israel meet together, then mercy, which was at first but a motive to the hope, becomes a promoter of the hope, to the causing of redemption. Did Jacob wrestle with an angel, and prevail, when he was but Jacob, and shall he not prevail with God, by hoping in God, when he is Israel; and if prevailing with an angel he got a blessing, though joined with halting, shall he not, prevailing with God, get redemption, and that joined with plenty? Oh let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy and plenteous redemption, and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

But though God's redemption be plenteous, yet it seems not to be general; general indeed of all, for of all iniquities; but not general to all, for to none but to Israel; and not to all Israel neither, but only to those of Israel that hope in the Lord; for if they be Israelites, and do not hope; or if they hope, and be not Israelites, it will not serve: they must be both, or as good be neither; at least there will follow no certainty of redemption. And, alas, then what good will this be to me? for were not Israelites all Jews? and must I be a Jew, or can I look for no redemption? O my soul, that which Israel was in David's time, Christians are in our time: Jews were then, Christians are now, the people and Church of God; and as to have been an Israelite then, so to be a Christian now, is a great degree of capacity for obtaining of redemption: let hope in the Lord be added, and then the capacity will be perfected. Let Israel hope in the Lord, and the Lord will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

But is not Israel the spouse of Christ,¹ without spot or wrinkle?² and if no spots, then what iniquities? and if no iniquities, what need of redeeming? It is so, indeed, in intentions and in endeavours: in intentions so resolute, in endeavours so absolute, that it may well be said it is so; but yet, while Israel is in the flesh, it is not, it cannot be without iniquities—without many iniquities, yet such as from which, if there be hope in Israel, there shall be redemption in God. No failing of this hope if there be not a failing in hope; but

¹ Isa. liv. 5. Cf. 2 Cor. xi. 2.

² Eph. v. 27.

what hope? Not a hope in man; not a hope in ourselves; not a hope in our own merits. No, my soul, only a hope in the merits of Christ, for this only is to hope in the Lord; yet think not that it is thy hope that redeems thee; hope, indeed, makes thee capable of redeeming, but it is the Lord himself that is thy Redeemer. Let Israel hope in the Lord, and the Lord shall redeem Israel from all his sins: whether sins of omission or of commission, whether sins of infirmity or of ignorance, whether sins of wilfulness or of presumption, they shall all be comprised within the charter of this redemption. And then consider how plentiful this redemption is besides; for to be redeemed from all iniquities draws after it an exemption from all the miseries that iniquities draw after them; from the unquietness of the flesh, from the frights of the world, from the terrors of hell, from the tyranny of Satan; which exemption, or rather which redemption, God grant us, as I hope he will, seeing with him is mercy, for his mercies' sake.

Hear my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, *and* in thy righteousness. 2. And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. 3. For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead. 4. Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate. 5. I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands. 6. I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul *thirsteth* after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah. 7. Hear me speedily, O LORD: my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit. 8. Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee. 9. Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me. 10. Teach me to do thy will; for thou *art* my God: thy spirit *is* good; lead me into the land of uprightness. 11. Quicken me, O LORD, for thy name's sake: for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble. 12. And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul: for I *am* thy servant.—PSALM cxliii. (Auth. Ver.)

MEDITATIONS AND DISQUISITIONS

UPON THE

HUNDRED AND FORTY-THIRD PSALM.

A LAS, O Lord, if thou hear not my prayer, I were as good not pray at all ; and if thou hear it, and give not ear unto it, it were as good thou didst not hear it at all. Oh, therefore, *Hear my prayer, O God, and give ear to my supplication*¹ [ver. 1], that neither my praying may be lost for want of thy hearing it, nor thy hearing it be lost for want of thy attending it. When I only make a prayer to God, it seems enough that he hear it ; but when I make a supplication, it requires that he give ear unto it, for seeing a supplication hath a greater intention in the setting out, it cannot without a greater attention be entertained. But what niceness of words is this, as though it were not all one to hear and to give ear, or as though there were any difference between a prayer and a supplication ? And is it not, perhaps, so indeed ?—seeing hearing sometimes may be only passive, where giving ear is always active ; and seeing Christ, we doubt [not], heard the woman of Canaan's first cry while it was a prayer, but gave no ear till her second cry, when it was grown to a supplication.² However it be, as thy hearing, O God, without giving ear would be to no purpose, so thy giving ear without giving answer would do me no good, oh, therefore, answer me, O God ; for if thou answer not my prayer, how canst thou answer my expectation ? My prayer is but the

¹ Ps. cxliii. 1 : " Hear my prayer, O Lord, give ear to my supplications : in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness." ² Matt. xv. 22—23.

seed; it is thy answer that makes the harvest. If thou shouldst not answer me at all, I could not hope for any harvest at all; and if thou shouldst answer me, and not in thy righteousness, there would be a harvest indeed, but nothing but of blasted corn. Oh, therefore, answer me, O God, but in thy righteousness, for thy righteousness never made unpleasing answer. It was an answer in thy righteousness which thou madest to Noah: My spirit shall not always strive with man, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his infancy.¹ It was an answer in thy righteousness which thou madest to Abraham: Fear not; I will be thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.² It was an answer in thy righteousness which thou madest to the thief on the cross: This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise. Oh, then, answer me also in thy righteousness, O God, and then the harvest of my hope will be as plentiful as the seven years of plenty foretold by Joseph.³

But what need I pray to God to answer me in his righteousness, seeing he is himself nothing but righteousness? Must not his answers need be like himself? Can he answer me otherwise than he is? O my soul, is it not said that with the froward God will show himself froward;⁴ and have I not then just cause to fear he should answer me frowardly, who have carried myself so frowardly towards him? Am not I one of that stock which God charged with being a froward generation?⁵ and can I be free from fear of the censure, who I know am not from guilt of the fault? Is it not with God as it is with nature, that as we sow so shall we reap?⁶ If we make an untoward sowing, must we not look for an untoward harvest? No, my soul: God, who is the Lord of nature, is not tied to the rules of nature. He can make it harvest without sowing, as he made it light without a sun; for how else came Paradise by all its fruits? how else came the three first days by all their light?⁷ And thus, O God, thou must vouchsafe to do with me; for, alas, what sowing can I

¹ Gen. vi. 3, 5: "My spirit shall not always strive with man. . . . And God saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in all the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually." ² Gen. xv. 1. ³ Gen. xli. 29. ⁴ Ps. xviii. 26. ⁵ Deut. xxxii. 20. ⁶ Gal. vi. 7. ⁷ Gen. i. 3, 16; ii. 9.

make but only in tears? and then, if there be reaping in joy,¹ must it not be the work of thine only hand? Oh, therefore, *enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified* [ver. 2]. Not only I, but no man living. What should I speak of men that are begotten in sin and born in iniquity,² when the first man, Adam, that was neither begotten nor born at all, much less in iniquity, yet could not hold weight in the balance of thy justice? What are all the generation of men but the multiplication of Adam? and seeing multiplication of sinners can never produce subtraction of sin, how can any man living be found innocent when Adam was found guilty? He indeed was arraigned and had his judgment openly, and we all know what his offence was: none of us yet are brought to the bar; when it shall come to that, is there any man living that will not be found guilty of more than eating a forbidden apple?³ and may we not then in Adam's judgment plainly foresee our own, if thou, O God, shouldst enter into judgment with thy servants?

But is this a sufficient reason why God should not enter into judgment with me, because I can say, My fellows are all guilty as well as myself? Is the alleging of others' faults an apology for mine? No apology in justice, O God, but yet in mercy some excuse, seeing my sin is not as the angels' sin was who were disobedient when others obeyed,⁴ but my sins are the general frailties of the whole kind; not one, not any one (the second Adam excepted) ever was, ever will be, that is not an offender; and wilt thou, O God, give cause to have it said, Wherefore hast thou made all men for nought? Thou wilt not, O God, be so severe but that some men shall be justified in thy sight; and if no man living, then some men dying; and if this be so, then welcome death, the most beneficial guest that can come unto me. But what death? Indeed, the death to sin,⁵ which none can die but they that be living in him who is the life itself. But if the thus dying shall be justified in his sight, and they that thus die be men living, how then is it true that no man living shall be justified?

¹ Ps. cxxvi. 5.² Ps. li. 5.³ Gen. iii. 11, 12.⁴ Jude 5.⁵ Rom. vi. 2.

Indeed, no man living the life only natural, yet some men living the life truly spiritual ; but rather, no man living shall be justified in his sight by any right of his own righteousness, yet some men living shall be justified by the right of his righteousness who is made to us both our righteousness and our justification.¹ Oh, then, let me live, O God, to thee, that I may die to sin ; but let me die to sin, that I may live in thee, that when I tremble at this saying, No man living shall in thy sight be justified, I may comfort myself with this, that I am dead to sin ; and being thus dead, am made capable, without crossing this saying, to be justified in thy sight.

It is not anything in myself, I confess, that gives me hope thou wilt hear my prayer ; alas, I see nothing in myself² but cause of despair ; but it is thine own promise, O God, who hast promised to hear and help all them that call upon thee when they are in trouble ; and seeing I cannot doubt of thy faithfulness, I therefore do not doubt of thy promise, but have through thy mercy a hope, through thy power a confidence, that thou wilt answer me in thy righteousness and in thy faithfulness.

It was thy righteousness that thou didst make the promise, but it is thy faithfulness that thou wilt keep thy promise : and seeing I am certain of thy making it, how can I be doubtful of thy keeping it ? If thou shouldst not answer me in thy righteousness, yet thou shouldst be righteous still ; but if thou shouldst not answer me in thy faithfulness, thou shouldst not be faithful still ; and therefore thy righteousness to hear my prayer must be a suit, as being of grace, and done only at thy pleasure ; but thy faithfulness to answer my prayer may be a claim, as being of due, and no longer in thy choice. Oh how much am I bound to thee, O God, who of thy free grace hath bound thyself to me, that thou canst no more now reject my prayer than thou canst reject thine own truth and faithfulness. Indeed, if I should call upon thee for obtaining of some worldly ends, or for the satisfying of some vain desire, thou mightst justly then reject my prayer, and no disparagement

¹ Rom. v. 16, 18.² Rom. vii. 18.

to thy faithfulness at all; but now that I call upon thee for being in trouble, the cause allowed by thyself for calling upon thee, now I hope thou wilt give me leave to challenge thy promise, and that I may presume, without any presumption, that thou wilt answer me in thy righteousness and in thy faithfulness.

And if ever trouble be just cause for calling upon thee, how can mine but be most just when *the enemy hath persecuted my soul, hath smitten my life down to the ground, and hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead?*¹ [ver. 3]. All this the enemy hath done unto me; but what enemy? is it not the enemy of all mankind, who hath singled me out, as it were, to a duel? and can I resist him myself alone, whom the whole army of mankind cannot? But is it not the enemy of thyself, O God, who is but my enemy because I am thy servant? and wilt thou see thy servants persecuted—in thy cause persecuted, and not protect them? Shall I suffer, grievously suffer for thy sake, and wilt thou forsake me? Alas, O Lord, if they were but some light evils that are inflicted upon me, I would bear them without complaining, and never make my moan to thee about them; but they are the three greatest miseries that can be thought of, the greatest persecution, the greatest overthrow, and the greatest captivity. For what persecution so grievous as to be persecuted in my soul; for he plays no less game than for souls: he casts, indeed, at the body sometimes, and sometimes at goods; but these are but the bye; the main of his aim is at the soul; for if he can otherwise win the soul, he cares not much for either body or goods, but rather makes use of them to keep men in security; for whatsoever he doth, whatsoever he leaves undone, it is all done but in persecution of the soul; and he can persecute as well with prosperity as with adversity, and knows how to fit their several application. And it seems he takes me for another Job;² he sees he can do no good upon me with fawning and clawing, and therefore falls now to

¹ Ps. cxliiii. 3: 'For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.' ² Job i. 10—12.

quarrelling and striking ; and he strikes no light blows, for he hath stricken my life down to the ground ; and lower would have stricken it, if thou, O God, hadst not broken his blow. He strikes all downward, to keep from heaven as much as he can ; and now that he sees me down, he lets me not rest so neither ; but seizeth upon me, and being himself the prince of darkness,¹ hath kept me in darkness—not for a night or two, as men stay at their inn, but for a much longer time, as at their dwelling ; and it is no ordinary darkness that he hath made me to dwell in, but even the darkness of dead men, and that in the highest degree as those that have been long dead. They that have been dead but awhile, are yet remembered sometimes, and sometimes talked of ; but they that have been long dead are as quite forgotten as if they never had been ; and such, alas, am I : so long have been made to dwell in darkness, as if I had been dead many years ago, that he that would seek to find me out, must be fain to look [for] me amongst the tombs and monuments. Indeed, to dwell in darkness is no better than the house of death ; for as long as we are in life, if we want sometimes the light of the sun, yet the light of a candle will serve to supply it ; but I, alas, am kept in such darkness, that neither the sunshine of thy Gospel nor the lanthorn of thy law gives any light unto thee ; I cannot with confidence say, as once I did, Thou, O God, shalt light my candle for me :² and as a body long dead grows cold and stiff, and is not to be bowed,³ so my soul, with continuance in sinning, is grown hardened, and, as it were, stiff in sin ; that it is as hard a matter to make me flexible to any goodness, as to bring a body long dead to life again.

And yet, it is not this great enemy himself only that thus afflicts me, but his limbs also are as eager against me. By their persecuting my soul may be seen their violence ; by their smiting my life to the ground, their cruelty ; by their making me dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead, their malice and spite against me, who could find in their hearts to bury me alive, and to pull, as it were, the sun

¹ Eph. vi. 12 : "Against the rulers of the darkness of this world." Ps. xviii. 28
² Bent.

out of heaven, rather than it should shine or give any light to me. And how then is it possible but with such a persecution, with such an overthrow, with such a captivity, my spirits must needs be overwhelmed within me, and my heart within me be made desolate?¹ [ver. 4]; for, alas, when my soul is persecuted, what can my spirits do? and when my life is smitten down to the ground, what comfort can my heart receive?

But is it not strange that my spirits should be overwhelmed and my heart be made desolate both at once, all one as to say that the streams should be overflowing when the spring is dry? for what is my heart but as the spring of my spirits? what are my spirits but as streams from my heart? It must indeed be some strange thing that can express the strange condition of my misery, who am made, as it were, a pattern of the misery of hell itself; for as in hell there are conceived to be contrary torments, burning with heat and burning with cold, as it is said, *Et frigus adurit* [even the cold burns], both together; so upon me are inflicted contrary miseries, the misery of desolateness, and the misery of overwhelming, both at once. A pitiful case, and yet not to be pitied; seeing I am therefore overwhelmed with sorrow, because desolate of grace, and therefore desolate of comfort, because overwhelmed with sin. But though I look for no pity from others, yet I look, O God, for some pity from thee; and all the pity I desire is but this, not to take away my desolateness, not to take away my overwhelming from me, but only to change their objects; let my heart be desolate still, but let it be of sin and sorrow; let my spirits be overwhelmed still, but let it be with grace and comfort.

Alas, O Lord, the state I am now in is beyond all bounds of patience: if I were but only persecuted, I might hope at least to save myself by flight; or if only my life were smitten down, I might hope in time to recover and rise again; but now that my spirits are overwhelmed and my heart is desolate within me, now I seem brought to the extremity of evil; misery is able to carry me no further; and I am only left to

¹ Ps. cxliii. 4: "Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate."

wonder how I do to live when I have no life, and how to breathe when I have no spirits? All that keeps life and soul together in me is my meditation, for *I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works, and muse on the work of thy hands* [ver. 5]. This meditation gives an ease to the overwhelming of my spirits, a comfort to the desolateness of my heart, for I am thinking sometimes upon Jonah how he was overwhelmed with waters and swallowed up of a whale, and yet at last delivered;¹ sometimes I am thinking of Joseph, how he was bound and left desolate in a ditch, and yet at last relieved;² and then I meditate thus with myself, Is God's power confined to persons? could he deliver them in their extremities, and can he not me in mine? Is his power restrained to times? could he do wonders in those days, and can he do none in these? are all his great works of old, and hath he not other new that are as great? But not satisfying myself with the consideration of things in this inferior world, I raise my meditation up to heaven, the work of his hands, and then I consider how glorious his hands must needs be that have been the framers of so glorious a work.³ But especially I muse to what end this glorious frame was made, whether with any relation to us wretched creatures that live on the earth; and then, methinks, he would never have made us so plainly to see it if he did not mean we should at last come to it. But then I am doubting, though my soul perhaps may ascend up to it, yet how my heavy body should get thither, and, most of all, how be kept to stay there still? And then I think, Why may not God as well as give power to the soul to keep the body there, which else would fall down, as he gives power to the body to keep the soul here, which else would fly up? But this, at least, seems a satisfactory reason, because our bodies in the resurrection shall be raised up spiritual bodies,⁴ and, being spiritual, no fear of falling down. But then I am troubled as much to think how this is possible, that bodies should be spiritual? for is it not to say that our bodies shall be raised up, not bodies, but spirits? But to satisfy this, I conceive

¹ Jonah i. 15—17. ² Gen. xxxvii. 24, 28, etc. ³ Isa. xlv. 24. ⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 44.

first that a body and a spirit are not terms perhaps absolutely contradictory; at least, that there is great difference between being a spirit and being spiritual, for as our bodies now are earthy, and yet are not earth, so they may then be spiritual, and yet not be spirits; bodies in the true nature and substance of bodies, and spiritual in the qualities and endowments of spirits. And here I grow as much overwhelmed with admiration¹ as I was before with persecution, for I cannot but be in ecstasy² to think what wonderful joys these glorious heavens must needs yield to the children of God, when this low earth, as mean as it is, affords so great pleasures to the children of men; for who can doubt but that the heavens are as much superior to the earth in pleasantness as in place, and transcend it as much in goodness as they do in greatness?

With such kind of thoughts I find myself so revived that I am ready to correct myself, and say, Why should I complain that my heart is desolate within me, when it is, or may be, accompanied with such meditations? why should I complain that my spirits are overwhelmed within me, when they have or may have the allay of such hopes?

And while thus, O God, I stretch out my thoughts upon the works of thy hands, I am drawn by a certain sympathy of grace to *stretch out my hands to thee*³ [ver. 6], as if I were in hope thou wouldst take me by the hand and draw me to thee; but, alas, with all my stretching them out, they are too short to reach thee. Oh that they were as long as my desire, I would then take hold of thee, O God, and not let thee go, until, as the angel to Jacob, thou didst give me a blessing.⁴ I know my hands are but dumb suitors, yet in the best language they have, which is their stretching out, they humbly entreat thee to refresh *my soul*, which *thirsteth after thee as a dry land*.

But is there not some further mystery in David's stretching out his hands? hath it not a relation to Christ stretching out his hands on the cross? seeing Christ, upon his stretching out

¹ Wonder. ² A trance or swoon. (Bailey's Dict.) ³ Ps. cxliii. 6: "I stretch out my hands to thee; my soul *thirsteth* after thee, as in a thirsty land." ⁴ Gen. xxxii. 26.

his hands there, presently thirsted,¹ as David doth here. Oh then vouchsafe, O God, not to deal so hardly with me, as the Jews did with Christ, when I say I thirst, offer me vinegar to drink, as they did him. Alas, the blind Jews were as ignorant of Christ's thirst as of his person, and therefore offered him vinegar where they should have offered themselves, for themselves it was he thirsted after, and them he would have received, though to him as sharp as vinegar, if they had come unto him, as appears by his prayer, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.² Christ indeed might well be athirst, who had been so long in a fit of burning, ever since he said I have a cup to drink, and oh how I burn until I drink it;³ and now drinking it he was, and drunk it more greedily than any dry land ever drunk in water, for as he stretched out his hands to receive all men's suits, so he drunk of this cup to quench all men's thirst; and yet with all his drinking could not quench his own, but stands complaining he thirsteth still. O most grievous alteration, but more than most grievous indignity: he whose hands stretched out the heavens,⁴ now to have his hands stretched out on a cross; he who is a fountain of living water,⁵ of which he that drinketh shall never thirst more,⁶ now to thirst himself, and have nothing to quench it. O my soul, canst thou think much to stretch out thy hands to him who had his hands stretched out on a cross for thee? canst thou think much to thirst after him as a dry land, who more than any dry land still thirsteth after thee? for whatsoever he hath done, whatsoever he hath suffered for, he hath done it, and suffered it, even for thee. Alas, O Lord, I think it not much: I so much adore the stretching out thy hands on the cross, that I am tempted to adore the cross itself on which they were stretched; at least, as Moses did the ground where the bush was burning and not consumed;⁷ and if I had of the water of the clearest fountain, if the juice of the purest grape, yet my soul in them would find no relish at all: they might serve to quench my bodily thirst, but nothing but thyself, the thirst of my soul. When the Israelites thirsted in the

¹ John xix. 28.² Luke xxiii. 34.³ Luke xii. 50; cf. Matt. xx. 22.⁴ Isa.

xlv. 24.

⁵ Jer. ii. 13.⁶ John iv. 14.⁷ Exod. iii. 2.

wilderness, thou gavest them water out of a rock, and the rock was Christ.¹ Oh, how my soul rejoiceth at this word for it is the water of this rock that my soul thirsteth after, that if thou give me of this water the thirst of my soul will soon be quenched. But then be pleased, O God, not to give it in drops or spoonfuls, that would rather inflame my appetite than quench my thirst, for my soul thirsteth after thee as a dry land. It is not dews or mizzling showers will serve; thou must open the cataracts of heaven,² and pour down plentiful showers of grace upon me, or the thirst of my soul will never be quenched.

A land without water is barren, and bears nothing; and is not this it which Christ saith, Without me ye can do nothing?³ but moistened with water, it grows fruitful, and bears all things; and is not this it which St. Paul saith, I can do all things in him that comforteth me?⁴ And have I not cause, then,—just cause, O God,—to thirst after thee as a dry land? A land moistened with water, brings forth flowers for the delight of man; corn and grass for the use of man and beast;⁵ grapes and wine for the cheering of God and man;⁶ and doth not the moistening of thy grace bring forth the flower of hope, far more delightsome to my soul than rose or gillyflower is to the eye? the fruits of charity, of far more use to man and beast than either corn or grass? the sweet grape of faith, that cheers the heart of God, as a sacrifice; of man, as a cordial? and have I not cause, then—just cause, O God—to thirst after thee as a dry land? Alas, far more than any dry land. A land though never so dry may yet of water have soon too much; but can my soul of thee have ever enough? Is it not rather in a kind of spiritual dropsy: *Quo plus bibuntur, plus sitiuntur aquæ?* [The more we drink water, the more we thirst for it.] The more I taste thee, the more I thirst after thee; the more I enjoy thee, the more I long to enjoy thee more; and long shall ever, until I come to enjoy thee for ever; and then shall long

¹ 1 Cor. x. 4. ² Mal. iii. 10: "Prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven [Vulgate—cataractas cœli], and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it.*" ³ John xv. 5. ⁴ Phil. iv. 13: "I can do all things, through Christ who strengtheneth me." (Vulgate—in eo qui me confortat.) ⁵ Ps. civ. 14. ⁶ Judg. ix. 15.

for thee more than ever. To say, therefore, that my soul thirsteth after thee as a dry land, is not so much to express for how much it thirsteth as how much it thirsteth; not so much how extensive my thirst is, as how intente it is; for is it not a pitiful sight to see the earth stand gaping, as it were, to take in water; and for want of moisture to part asunder, as ready to crumble into dust and powder? and in this pitiful case am I, for with want of thy moistening grace to cement them together, my soul is ready to part from my body, and my body to turn into the dust of which it was made. Oh therefore vouchsafe, O God, to pour down showers of thy grace upon me, as in regard of my great thirst, plentifully; so in regard of my great danger, speedily; for, alas, O Lord, my soul with long thirsting grows faint; that if thou supply me not with the moisture of thy grace, the sooner I shall be forced to leave calling upon thee with very faintness. And how canst thou supply me with grace, if thou afford me not the grace to hear me? Oh therefore *hear me speedily, O LORD: my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like to them that go down into the pit* [ver. 7]; and if my spirit fail for want of thy hearing me, how would it fail if thou shouldst hide thy face from me? The refreshing of my soul requites as well as my seeing of thee, as thy hearing of me; for though the hearing of me afford, I may say, the moisture, yet it is my seeing of thee that must minister the warmth; and seeing I am like to earth, not only in dryness, but as well in coldness, I stand no less in need of warmth for my coldness than of moisture for my dryness. For what good is it to the earth to have the rain to moisten it, if it have not, withal, the sun to warm it? and what can be a sun to warm my soul, but only thy face, and the light of thy countenance? Oh therefore hide not thy face from me, O God, lest I be like to them that go down into the pit. For to want either moisture or warmth, are killing things both: as want of moisture causeth death, by defect of the passive part; so want of warmth by defect of the active; and, therefore, as the Greeks called dead men *alibantas*,¹ as wanting (*αλβας*) moisture, the fuel of life, so the Latins do as justly call them *extinctos* [quenched], as wanting heat, the fire of

life. Hide not, therefore, thy face from me, O God—the true sun to warm my soul,—lest I be like to them that go down into the pit ; lest, though I be not quite dead, yet I be at least like to them that are, and so should be in danger, I to lose a soul, and thou a servant.

But consider, O my soul, how all this trouble comes upon thee ; look into the cause, and so thou mayest the better wind thyself out. And is not all thy trouble long of God's displeasure ? if, then, his anger be a cause of thy danger, what can be a cause of thy safety but his lovingkindness ? Oh, therefore, Cause me, O God, to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning ; for in thee do I trust¹ [ver. 8]. There are other causes that promise me fair to free me from trouble ; but, alas, they are causes that are caused, and are not free themselves ; and how then should they free me ? Thou, O God, art the fountain cause ; and nothing can resist thy will : oh, therefore, be thou pleased, O God, to cause me to hear thy lovingkindness, and I will never seek further, never look after any other cause for my deliverance.

But though perhaps I cannot find the full operation of it instantly, yet cause me at least to hear of it ; for if once I hear it will be, I shall never doubt it shall be. And although the pleasure seem to consist in only the feeling it, yet I shall feel a pleasure in only the hearing it : the pleasure of a *præludium* [prelude], which is oftentimes as pleasing as the song itself. Who is not glad to hear good news ? and what news so good as to hear of God's lovingkindness ? O my soul, it is so good, that it makes all other news good, though seeming never so bad.¹ It is like the meal which Elisha cast into the pot, and made the broth wholesome which was before deadly.² It is like the rod with which Moses struck the rock, and made it gush out with water in abundance.³

But is not good news welcome at any time ? and what need then such haste of hearing it in the morning ? would it not serve as well to hear it at any other time of the day ?

¹ Ps. cxliii. 8 : "Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning, for in thee do I trust ; cause me to know the way wherein I should walk ; for I lift up my soul unto thee." ² 2 Kings iv. 41. ³ Numb. xx. 11.

Alas, O Lord, my nights are very unquiet : either I sleep not at all, but am kept waking through anguish of my mind ; or if I sleep, I am frightened with fearful dreams, through terror of thine anger. Oh therefore cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning, that I may at least awake in comfort, and may have the whole day before me to re-collect my spirits. To hear thy lovingkindness in the morning, makes my waking be saluted, as it were, with music ; makes my troubles seem as they were but dreams ; makes me find it true that though weeping may endure for a night, yet joy cometh in the morning.¹

But what may this lovingkindness be which David here so earnestly prays to hear of ? Is it perhaps such a lovingkindness as Hezekiah heard of when God sent him word he would add fifteen years to his life ?² but, alas, what is the addition of fifteen years ? Or is it to hear of the remission of his sins, as he did indeed by the prophet Nathan ?³ Or is it to hear his sick child should be restored to health, which he so much desired ?⁴ All these may be ; but yet no more reason for hearing them in the morning, than at any other time of the day. And may we not then have leave to reflect our thoughts upon that lovingkindness which was indeed heard of in the morning,—betimes in the morning, when the sun was yet but rising ; the lovingkindness of God in Christ, and Christ to us ?—the lovingkindness of Christ's resurrection ? For what could he pray to hear of, so comfortable as this ? If the forgiveness of his sins, this crowns it. If the recovery of his sick child, this makes amends for it. If the addition of years to his life, this eternizeth it.⁵ For as by the power of Christ's resurrection we all shall rise, so by the virtue of his ascension we shall all ascend ; and ascend thither where sins shall be no more remembered, nor sickness any more be feared, and where death itself shall be swallowed up in victory. Indeed, if David had lived at this day, he would have made it an Alleluia,⁶ which here he makes an Hosanna ;⁷ have made it a song of praise,

¹ Ps. xxx. 5. ² 2 Kings xx. 6. ³ 2 Sam. xii. 13. ⁴ 2 Sam. xii. 16. ⁵ Ps. xxi. 4 : "Thou gavest *it* him, *even* length of days, for ever and ever." ⁶ Rev. xix. 1 ; Ps. cvi. 1. ⁷ Luke i. 78. ⁸ Matt. xxi. 9.

which here he makes a prayer ; and therefore, O my soul, do thou as David would have done, and say, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up a mighty salvation for us in the house of his servant David.¹ It may well be said we hear this lovingkindness in the morning, seeing it makes it morning to us whensoever we hear it; for as the rising of the sun makes the morning of the day, so he, being the Sun of Righteousness,² makes it dayspring³ in our souls when we first receive him. But what should make God to cause me, that am so unworthy, to hear his lovingkindness? what, my soul, but his lovingkindness? For his lovingkindness is itself both the cause and the effect. It is his lovingkindness that causeth me to hear it, as it is his lovingkindness that I desire to hear of. But is there no cause in ourselves that causeth God to make us to hear it? There is indeed a cause; but it is but *causa sine quâ non* [an essential condition]; and this it is, because I trust in God, a cause that worketh not, but is wrought upon, and, by being wrought upon, worketh; for as I could not trust in God without his lovingkindness, so by trusting in him I obtain to hear his lovingkindness. Oh how blessed a thing is this trusting in God! I know not whether I should call it a better tree, or a better fruit: seeing as it is the tree that bears this fruit, to make us hear God's lovingkindness, so it is the fruit that grows upon the tree of his lovingkindness.

But it is not enough that God be a cause of our hearing, if he be not as well a cause of our knowing; for seeing we are going a journey to God, what knowledge so necessary as to know the way? Oh therefore cause me, O God, to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.⁴ One would think it might have been sufficient to say, Show me the way wherein I should walk; for who is so simple but he can walk in the way, if the way be once showed him? And yet this would not have served, for were not our first parents showed the way when they were told,

¹ Luke i. 68, 69: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David." ² Mal. iv. 2. ³ Luke i. 78: "Whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us." ⁴ Ps. cxliii. 8.

Of the tree of good and evil ye shall not eat?¹ and yet how quickly did they go astray for all this showing! Did not John Baptist show the way plainly enough when he said, *Ecce Agnus Dei*, Behold the Lamb of God?² yet how many were ever the better for his *Ecce*? how many went ever the righter for his directing? But most of all, did not Christ himself show the way plainly enough when he said, in plain terms, *Ego sum via*, I am the way?³ yet how much was the way the more frequented for his plain showing it? It seems David knew this, and therefore would not say, Show me the way, but Cause me to know the way; for though God's showing the way may be mistaken or neglected, yet his causing to know the way can never be frustrate; but as Christ said, Whom the Spirit freeth, they are free indeed,⁴ so whom God causeth to know, they know indeed.

All knowing by other causes is subject to error, oftentimes by negligence, always by infirmity; perhaps by wilfulness, certainly by ignorance: only the knowing that is caused by God is certain and effectual, for he is the Alpha and Omega⁵ of causes: as nothing goes before to move it, so nothing comes after that can hinder it. Other causes are themselves but effects, and therefore can never be certain to produce effects that can be certain. Oh, then, cause me, O God, to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee. And here now comes in another *causa sine qua non*, for as I could not lift up my soul to thee if thou didst not cause me to know the way, so thou couldst not cause me to know the way if I did not lift up my soul to thee. O my soul, what ails thee to be so affected to the earth, and to things here below, that thou dost not voluntarily of thyself ascend up to heaven; nor indeed art able, unless thou be lifted up? Dost thou not know that thou art come from thence, and that there is thy *natale solum* [native soil], the place where thy true inheritance lies? Dost thou not know that thou comest hither but to fetch thee a body to carry up thither; and shall this body keep thee a captive here, and so far a captive as not to leave thee so much as *animum*

¹ Gen. ii. 17.
John viii. 36.

² John i. 29.
Rev. i. 8.

³ John xiv. 6.

⁴ Rom. viii. 2, cf.;

revertendi [a desire to return], so much as a thought of returning home? How art thou degenerated, my soul, that being sent to lift up another, thou art fain now to be lifted up thyself, and that with so much striving and reluctance? Indeed, one would think it an easy matter to lift up a soul to God, being so light a substance as it is; and it would be so indeed, if it were not for the heavy body that weighs it down, for *corpus aggravat multa cogitantem* [the body weighs down him that thinks much]; but now that it hath this heavy weight, this weighty clog hanging upon it, now it is so hard a matter to lift it up, that nothing but the strong arm of faith, the arm of a strong faith, is able to do it. I know there is a better place for my soul to be in than where it now is; and I know it is not here below; and therefore I lift up my soul, O God, in hope to find it with thee above.

But what indeed should cause David here to lift up his soul to God? Is it to be the nearer to God, the better to learn the way he should walk in? Or is it that the lifting up his soul is itself the way in which he should walk? Or is it but an expressing of the vehement desire he had to learn the way? Or is it, perhaps, to be out of the reach of those enemies that had persecuted his soul? and therefore it presently follows, *Deliver me from my enemies, O God: I flee to thee to hide me*¹ [ver. 9]; and if it be so, have we not then just cause to love our enemies, just cause to embrace our persecutors, seeing it is they that oftentimes make us lift up our souls, and to flee to God, who otherwise of ourselves are very unapt, certainly very unready, to flee unto him? But is David's lifting up his soul to God only a flying from his enemies, as though it were fear of his foes, and not love of God, that made him lift it up? No, my soul; but so long as it be lifted up, there can be no danger to the soul: then only is the soul in danger when it inclines downward too much, and by partaking of the body is made unapt to be lifted up.

It is something to be able to lift up my soul; but were it

¹ Ps. cxliii. 9: "Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me."

not better if my soul could lift up my body, that so, both joined together, might be ready to do God service? But, alas, my body is so affected to the earth, so addicted to stay here below, that it were in vain to attempt the lifting it up as yet; but let my soul be lifted up, and go from it for a time, that my body may see what will become of it when the soul is gone; and then, after it hath tried a while what it is to be left behind, and to be without a soul, then, if my soul return and come again to fetch it, it will find my body in another humour,—not only willing but longing to be lifted up, and to leave this earth, which now it so much affects, alas! to scorn it, which now it so much admires.

Though I prayed God before to cause me to know the way wherein I should walk, yet I pray him not here to cause me to know the way how I should fight; I know I am *impar congressus* [unequal to the fight], never able to stand in my enemies' hands; the way I must walk here is directly to fly, and I acknowledge it for a great favour of God that he leaves me this way to escape from my enemies.

But is David's valour come to this, that he is come now to be glad to fly? Had he not done better to have died valiantly than to fly basely? O my soul, to fly is not always a sign of baseness; not always a point of valour to stand to it; but then to fly when we find our own weakness, and to him to fly, in whom is our strength,—this is, if not valour, at least wisdom; but it is, to say true, both wisdom and true valour. And now, O God, seeing I find my own weakness, and know thy strength, what should I do but fly, and whither fly but only to thee?—to thee a strong fortress¹ to all that build upon thee, to thee a safe sanctuary² to all that fly unto thee.

But if God be he to whom I must fly, who is it, then, from whom I must fly?—who, O my soul, but from the world, and from myself? For he that will make God his *terminus ad quem* [goal] to whom to fly, must make the world his *terminus a quo* [starting-place] from which to fly: no coming to this ending but from this beginning; no

¹ Ps. xviii. 2.² Isa. viii. 24.

arriving at this haven but by avoiding the shelves¹ within ourselves; for he that loves the world, the love of God is not in him; and he that denies not himself, is not worthy that God should own him.²

But why should I think that God will assist me flying, that would not assist me fighting?—how can I hope he will be my sanctuary, that would not be my fortress? O my soul, who can tell whether God have not left me in distress, of purpose to try what succour I will seek?—who can tell whether he have not therefore been my fortress, to the end he might be my sanctuary? Did he ever fail to deliver any that put their trust in him,³ and shall I think he will begin with me? Did he ever refuse to protect any that fled to him for succour, and shall I fear to fare worse than ever any did? He had reason, I confess, to leave me to myself, when I fell a-numbering the people,⁴ and trusted in my own strength; but now that I have renounced all confidence in myself, all help from the arm of flesh,⁵ now all the world shall not persuade me but that he will receive me, now that I fly unto him. And the rather for that I fly not to him, as the world used to do, for preferment in the world; but I fly to him only but to hide me;⁶ and he will do little for me if he will not do so much as hide me; for to hide me is no more to him than to receive me, seeing he dwells in light inaccessible,⁷ whither my enemies, that are children of darkness, can never come to find me out. I fly not to hide me in thickets and bushes, that may be felled with axes and burnt with fire; but I fly to the Bush, burning and not consuming,⁸ where I know myself safe against fire and sword. For if a flaming sword be able to keep out of Paradise,⁹ the flaming bush,¹⁰—at least he that appeared in the bush,—I am sure is able to keep out of danger.

But why should David fly to God to hide him, seeing hiding is best done by darkness, and God is all light? O my soul, God hides with light, as he is hidden with

¹ Sand-banks. ² Matt. x. 37, 38. ³ Ps. xxv. 3. ⁴ 2 Sam. xxiv. 2. ⁵ Jer. xvii. 5: "Cursed be the man that . . . maketh flesh his arm." ⁶ Ps. cxliii. 9: "Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me." ⁷ 1 Tim. i. 16. ⁸ Exod. iii. 2. ⁹ Gen. iii. 24. ¹⁰ Exod. iii. 2—6.

light, and takes not away visibility but by addition of lustre: his *tegere* [covering] is *protegere* [protecting], a hiding that makes not obscure, but more conspicuous; and David, for all his other glories, had never shined so much to posterity, if he had not fled to God, and been hidden by him.

But though it may stand with valour to fly, yet can it stand with valour to fly to hide himself? Flying may be by way of retreat, or it may be to recover new force; but flying to hide oneself must needs argue pusillanimity, as though he durst not, as though he never meant to dare to show himself in arms again. But, O my soul, when I fly to God to hide me, my meaning is to hide my sin, for my sin and I are all one; or, rather, my sin is more I than I am myself; and were it not happy for me if sin could be made so cowardly in me that it never should dare to show itself again in arms?

And yet what good will God's hiding my sins do me, if, as often as God hides them, I lay them open again by committing of new? Oh therefore *teach me to do thy will, O God: thy spirit is good; and lead me into the land of uprightness*¹ [ver. 10]. For if thou teach me to do thy will, I shall never lay open that which thou hidest; but, rather, I shall never commit so many new sins, to put thee to the trouble of such continual hiding.

We may call this sentence a description of David's school; and it is a very complete one; at least it hath in it the three best things that belong to a school—the best teacher, the best scholar, and the best lesson; for who so good a teacher as God? who so good a scholar as David? what so good a lesson as to do God's will? I have oftentimes desired to do God's will, but never could, never could as I desired; and now I see the reason: God had not taught me to do it, and without his teaching it can never be done. Unless we be *docti a Deo*, taught of God to do his will, we may profit perhaps in the contemplative part, but we shall never be good proficient in the active part. We have many teachers to know God's

¹ Ps. cxliii. 10: "Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness."

will, but none to do it ; for, alas, the best learned are in this but learners themselves ; and to teach to know God's will, and not teach to do it, can never make good scholars ; it may puff up with knowledge, but can never make scholars, but worthy of more stripes. It is said of Christ, that he taught with power, and not as the Scribes and Pharisees ;¹ and he might well be said to teach with power, seeing we may say indeed that he taught with power ; for it is a great power to be able to do God's will—a power exceeding all strength of nature, and therefore not to be done by Scribes and Pharisees. Thou only, O God, mayest truly be said to teach with power, because thou only indeed art the Teacher of power. And as I am well assured of thy power to do it, so I am as little doubtful of thy will to do it, seeing *thy spirit is good*, and goodness is apt to communicate itself. No infection is so apt to set a disease upon another as goodness is apt to make another good ; and how can it make another good but only by teaching to do thy will, which only is our goodness ? And when, O God, thou hast trained me up in this school, and taught me to do thy will, oh leave me not so, but lead me on to the land of uprightness, for this is the academy to which they are sent out of this school, that the nursery of this colony ; and might I not then challenge thee, O God, of unkindness, if, having trained me up in this school, thou shouldst not send me to this academy ?—if, having bred me up in this nursery, thou shouldst not make me a member of this colony ? Oh then lead me, O God, into the land of uprightness, that I may have a place to put that in practice which I learn here in theory,—a place, at least, where I may do thy will with quietness, which I cannot do here but with disturbance. O my soul, where I may do God's will with exaltation, which I do not—alas, I cannot do here, but with reluctance.

And now, O my soul, why hast thou sojourned so long in Mesech ? why hast thou dwelt so long in the tents of

¹ Matt. vii. 29 : " For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes."

Kedar?¹ It is more than time now to look thee out a better dwelling; and where is any better dwelling to be had but in the land of uprightness? I know, indeed, there is such a land, but I know not the way to it; and I know the way is so hard to find, that it cannot be gone without a guide; and as there is no going to it without a leader, so there is no leader to it but only God; all other leaders but, will carry us out of the way, that we were better to make a stand than to follow their steps. God only is the true Pharos, the true landmark, to set them right that would else go astray; for his law is a lantern to our feet, and a guide to our paths.² It was he that set a star in the heavens to guide the wise men of the East to find this land out,³ and it is he that will set the like or a better star in my heart, to guide me to it. Oh, therefore, thou that didst lead the Israelites by the hands of Moses and Aaron,⁴ lead me also by the hands of thy prophets and apostles, that as the Israelites were led into a land flowing with milk and honey,⁵ so I may be led into this land flowing with righteousness and uprightness; for as that land was the journey's end to which all their wanderings in the wilderness tended, so this land is the place of repose to which, after all my pilgrimage in this troublesome world, my soul aspires. Alas, O Lord, I live now as in a sea of confusion, tossed with the waves of misery and with the billows of sin; oh set me on land in the firm land of uprightness, where there are no billows nor waves of either misery to follow sin, or of sin to draw on misery.

There are some children of fortune that think the *insula fortunata* (the Fortunate Islands) to be the land of uprightness; but this cannot be, for what hath uprightness to do with fortune? But though I cannot say the Fortunate Islands be the land of uprightness, yet I may truly say the land of uprightness is the Fortunate Islands, seeing no man ever arrived there that was not presently made, I

¹ Ps. cxix. 5: "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar." ² Ps. cxix. 105: "Thy word is a lamp" (Vulg., *lucerna*, a lantern) "unto my feet, and a light unto my path." ³ Matt. ii. 2. ⁴ Ps. lxxvii. 30. ⁵ Exod. iii. 17.

will not say fortunate, but certainly happy. The truth is, this land to us yet is *terra incognita* [an unknown land]; discovered only that such a land there is; but no man living hath ever yet sailed into it. God, indeed, is the only Pilot to it, and it cannot be sailed into but by his compass. Oh, then, vouchsafe, O God, to sit at the stern, and to direct my course, that being led into it by thee, I may be naturalized and made a member of it,—for there, at least, we shall be all friends: no enemies there from whom to hide me; and more than this, I shall need no enemy there to make me fly to thee, seeing, once there, I shall always be with thee; and once with thee, never more to be parted from thee.

But, alas, what good will God's leading me into the land of uprightness do me, if I happen to be dead before I come there? Is the land of uprightness like the field of Golgotha, a land only of dead men's bones?¹ and am I not like to be dead when my enemies have smitten my life down to the ground already? Oh, therefore, *quicken me, O God, for thy name's sake*² [ver. 11]; for how can I doubt but thou canst quicken me, being alive, who I know wilt quicken me when I am dead? for didst thou not so to the widow of Nain's³ son? Didst thou not so to Lazarus?⁴ and can it be thou shouldst be partial to quicken some and not to quicken others? No, O Lord, it is happy for me that my enemies have smitten my life to the ground, seeing now, being dead to this wicked world, I am ready for a new life, and want but quickening; and seeing thou art Lord and giver of life,⁵ and hast gotten thee a name for quickening, oh quicken me for thy name's sake, and let not thy name be blemished for want of quickening me; that as by thy leading me into the land of uprightness, I shall have a place where to lead a life when I have it, so by thy quickening me, and renewing my spirits, I may have a life to lead when I come there. And yet, why am I so earnest with God

¹ Matt. xxvii. 33: "Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull." ² Ps. cxliii. 11: "Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's sake; for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble." ³ Luke vii. 15. ⁴ John xi. 44. ⁵ John vi. 33: "He which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world."

to quicken me, that am in such a world of troubles? for what would his quickening do but make me the more sensible to feel my troubles? Alas, as long as my troubles continue, it were better for me to be without his quickening—better, indeed, to be quite dead. Oh, therefore, not only quicken me for thy name's sake, but for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble; that as by quickening me thou givest me life, so by bringing me out of trouble thou mayest give me a quiet life. This, indeed, will be some refreshing to my soul; it will give me, at least, a breathing-time of quietness, but it will not yet give me a perfect *quietus est* [he is at rest]; for as long as my enemies continue, will they not always be plotting new troubles against me? And am I not then in danger of falling into a relapse of troubles? and are not relapses more grievous than the first accesses? Oh, therefore, not only bring my soul out of trouble, O God, but *of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul*¹ [ver. 12]; that as by bringing me out of trouble I have quietness or the present, so by cutting off my enemies, the root of my troubles, I may never be troubled more, but may serve thee without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of my life.

But mark here, my soul, with what three cords David seeks to draw God to grant him his suits: for his name's sake, for his righteousness' sake, and for his mercy's sake,—three such motives, that it must be a very hard suit that God will deny, if either of them be used. But though all the three be strong motives, yet as David riseth in his suits, so he may seem also to rise in his motives; and by this account; for his righteousness' sake will prove a motive of a higher degree than for his name's sake, and for his mercy's sake the highest of them all—as indeed his mercy-seat is the highest part of all his ark,² if it be not rather that as the attributes of God, so these motives, that are drawn from the attributes, are of equal pre-eminence.

¹ Ps. cxliii. 12: "And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul: for I am thy servant." ² Exod. xxv. 21.

But if the three motives be all of them so strong, being each of them single, how strong would they be if they were all united, and twisted, I may say, into one cord? And united they are all, indeed, into a motive, which God hath more clearly revealed to us than he did to David (although it be strange, seeing it was his Lord; and yet not strange, seeing it was his son); and this is the motive: for thy Son Christ Jesus' sake; for he is the *verbum abbreviatum* [the Word in brief], in whom are included all the motives—all the powerful motives—that can be used to God for obtaining our suits. That as David, making three suits, used three motives, so I may put the three suits into one, and use but this one motive; and say, Quicken me, O God, and deliver me out of trouble: cut off mine enemies, for thy Son Christ Jesus' sake; and using but this one motive, I shall be so much surer of prevailing than David was, as a threefold [cord] is stronger than when the three are each of them but single.¹

These three motives are all existent in God, but God looks as well for a motive in us; and one, indeed, there is in us by his acceptance; and this it is which David useth here when he saith, *for I am thy servant*; for such is the wonderful tenderness of God towards his servants, that if this motive in us be joined to the motives in him, there cannot be so hard a suit that will be denied; as it is indeed a special article in the indentures of covenant between God and his servants, that whatsoever they shall ask in his Son's name shall be granted to them; that if a threefold cord be hard to be broken, this fourfold cord will be impossible to be broken.

But is it not that David compliments here with God when he saith, I am thy servant?—using a phrase of speech which we use at parting with any of account, to say, I am your servant? And if it be so, it is like to be but a slender motive to God for granting his suit. O my soul, if David had used compliments with God, he could not have been the man he is said to be—a man after God's own heart;

¹ Eccl. iv. 12: "A threefold cord is not quickly broken."

for God is not as man, to look for compliments, much less to accept them ; but as his *dicere* to us is *facere*—his word, his deed, so he looks for the like from us to him ; not, indeed, in ability of performance, which in man cannot be, but yet in sincerity of heart, which in servants always ought to be. Oh, therefore, my soul, be careful, not in compliment to say thou art, but in spirit and truth to be indeed the servant of God ; for he that shall use these motives to God, For thy name's sake, For thy righteousness' sake, For thy mercy's sake, add also the united motive, For Christ's sake, and is not God's servant, is like to speed no better than the Jewish conjurors did who sought to cast out devils in Christ's name, when they were not Christ's servants ;¹ for how can one hope to obtain a suit for which he is not a competent suitor ? and who can be a competent suitor to obtain anything at God's hand but he only that is his true servant ? for though the motives in God give our suits their efficacy, yet it is this motive in ourselves that gives the capacity ; but no capacity with God, who is all spirit and truth, but by being his servant in spirit and truth.

One scruple is remaining yet : how David can pray God to cut off his enemies for his mercy's sake ? for is not his mercy over all his works ?² and are not David's enemies in the number of God's works ? and can there be mercy in destroying ? Indeed, God's general mercy is over all his works, but his special mercy over none but his servants ; and of this special mercy it is that David prays God to cut off his enemies ; for the mercy is to David, and not to David's enemies ; and is it not a mercy in God to David to cut off them that would cut off him ? And yet a degree further ; for is not destroying then a mercy when preserving would be a cruelty ? and were it not a cruelty to preserve the wicked when they are wilfully bent upon destroying the godly ?

But how should this happen to David, that a prince so just, so merciful, so pious, so careful of all religious duties, should have enemies ? God knows, it is easily answered ;

¹ Acts xix. 13—15.² Ps. cxlv. 9.

for it is cause enough for the wicked to be enemies of any man whom they but see to be a servant of God ; but this makes amends, that it is cause enough for God to cut off any whom he but sees to be at enmity with his servants, which David intimates here when he saith, Cut off my enemies, O God, for I am thy servant.

And here an end of David's repentance ; yet we may stay a little to consider what a blessed end it makes, and with what happy success it concludes. He that had his life smitten down to the ground, is now quickened again, and hath his spirits revived ; he that was persecuted in his soul, is now delivered from all trouble ; he that had a world of enemies insulting over him, hath now all his enemies cut off and destroyed : that justly now he may cry *Victoria* [Victory !], and may turn his penitential psalms into songs of rejoicing ; and we may turn for him the Lamentations of Jeremiah into the Canticles of Solomon ; and all of us, if we but follow his example, may take down our harps from the willows of Babylon, and may turn our dirges into hymns, aspiring to be choristers in the great choir of heaven—to sing with angels the eternal Alleluiah.

Annotationes hæ Paraphrastice in 'Psalmum 143'
typis mandentur.

SA. BAKER.

Ex ædibus Fulham,
Iunij die 27, 1638.¹

¹ These paraphrastic notes on Ps. cxliii. may be printed :

SA. BAKER.

At my house at Fulham, June 27, 1638

MEDITATIONS
AND
DISQVISITIONS
UPON
SEVEN CONSOLATORIE
PSALMES OF *DAVID*:

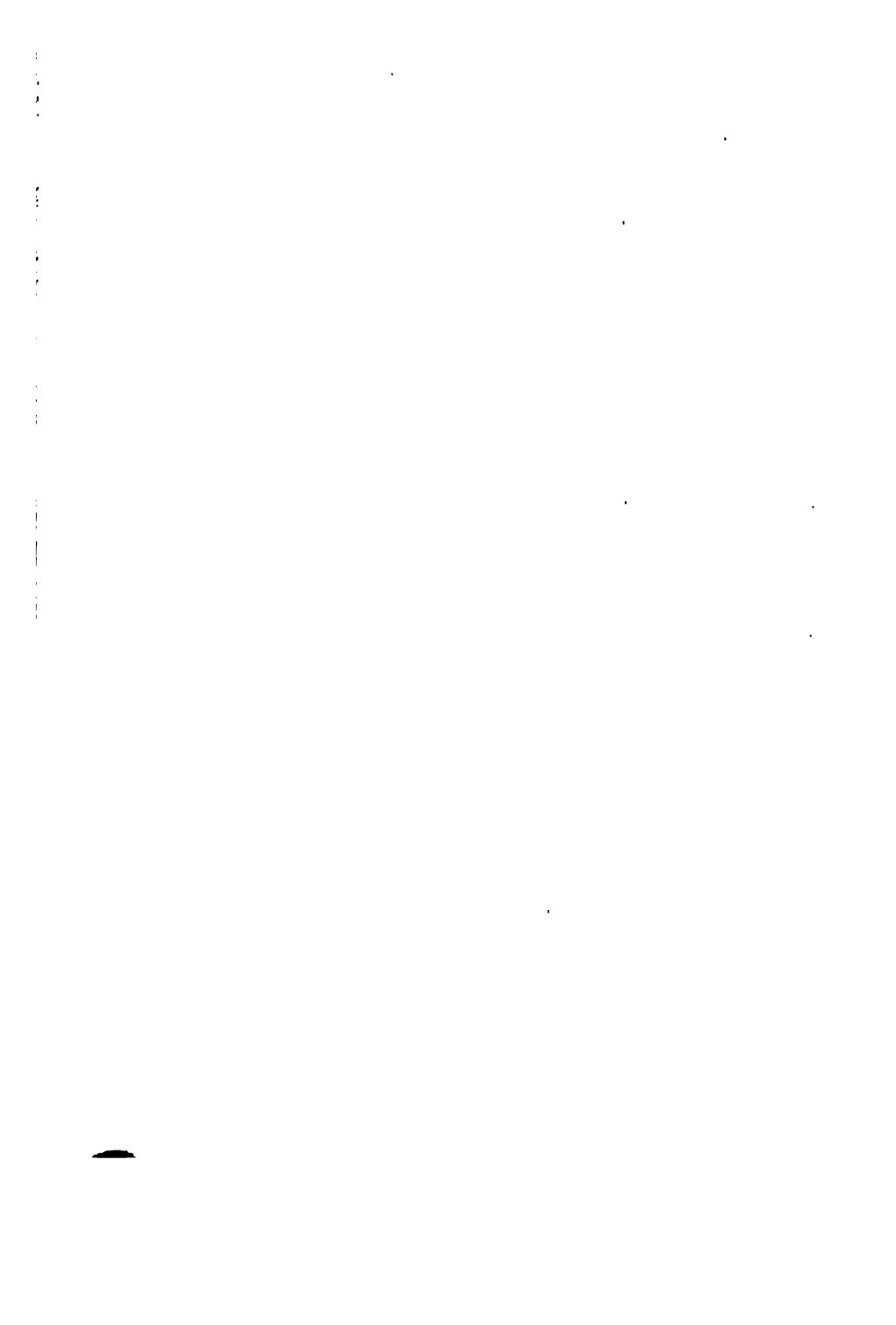
NAMELY,

<i>The 23.</i>	}	{	<i>The 34.</i>
<i>The 27.</i>			<i>The 84.</i>
<i>The 30.</i>			<i>The 103.</i>
<i>The 116.</i>			

By S^r RICHARD BAKER, *Knight.*



LONDON,
Printed by *John Dawson*, for *Francis Eglesfield*,
and are to be sold at the signe of the Marigold
in *Pauls Church-yard.* 1640.



To the
RIGHT HONOURABLE
WILLIAM LORD CRAVEN,
BARON OF HAMPSTEAD, &c.*

MOST HONOURED LORD,—I shall perhaps move envy to say, *Quæ te tam læta tulerunt sæcula*? [What happy age has brought thee?] but for myself, I am bound to say it, who have received from your Lordship indeed a great favour, the remission of a great debt; for which, notwithstanding, I account myself to stand obliged still, though in a less profitable, yet in a more binding obligation, to be your perpetual servant. I am called upon by gratefulness to erect some monument in honour of your bounty; and a more lasting monument I could not think of within the compass of my poor abilities than to dedicate these Psalms of David to the memory of your name; for though your own heroic virtue have made you a monument of the same metal that Fame's trumpet is made, which is likely and worthy to last long, yet this perhaps may prove *monumentum famæ perennius*, a monument that will continue your memory, when Fame itself shall be buried in oblivion. But how long soever it shall continue, yet not so long as my devotion to be, as my desire to be accounted to be,

Your Lordship's humble and devoted servant,
RICHARD BAKER.

* For Biographical Notice see Editor's Introduction.

Imprimatur,
Thos. Wykes, R. P. Episc. Lond.
Sacell. Domest.

September 11, 1639.

The LORD *is* my shepherd ; I shall not want. 2. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures : he leadeth me beside the still waters. 3. He restoreth my soul : he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 4. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil : for thou *art* with me ; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. 5. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies : thou anointest my head with oil ; my cup runneth over. 6. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life : and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.—
PSALM xxiii. (Auth. Vers.)

MEDITATIONS

UPON

THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM OF DAVID.

IS it not a grievous fall that where I might have said, The Lord is my Creator, and hath made me after his own image, I am now glad to say [ver. 1],¹ The Lord is my Shepherd, as though I were but a sheep; and yet perhaps no fall in this at all, for what was I when I was at best but the Lord's sheep, depending wholly upon him for all I had,—no clothes to cover my nakedness but of his making, no food to satisfy my hunger but of his providing? And oh that I had continued his sheep still; for then, though weak, I should have been innocent; though feeble, I should have been harmless; whereas by taking (O miserable mistaking!) the serpent for a shepherd, I became of an innocent sheep a ravening wolf, and should have so continued at least a perpetual strayer, if my true Shepherd (O the wonderful bowels of compassion!) had not left the ninety-nine in the wilderness to seek after me, and had not found me out and brought me back again into his fold,² that if there be joy in heaven that the lost sheep is found, there ought to be much more joy in earth³ that the lost sheep can say, The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.

But how can I truly say, The Lord is my Shepherd, seeing he hath turned me over, sheep and lambs and all, to St. Peter to be our shepherd?⁴ Can he turn me over to

¹ Ps. xxiii. 1: "The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want."
² Luke xv. 7. ³ John xxi. 15—17.

⁴ Luke xv. 4, 5.

another, and yet himself retain a property in me still? But is it not that there is a hierarchy of shepherds—St. Peter and his successors but ministerial shepherds; God himself the Shepherd paramount? He led his people like sheep by the hand of Moses and Aaron.¹ He but used the service of Moses and Aaron: himself was the Shepherd still; it was he that led them. And is it not said of kings, too, that they are ποιμένες λαῶν, shepherds of the people? And perhaps David speaks here as he was a king; for though a king be a shepherd in relation to his subjects, yet he is but a sheep in relation to God, for relation in all created things makes *quidlibet ex quolibet* [what you will, of whatever material], a sheep of a shepherd, and a shepherd of a sheep, till we come at God, and there relation ceaseth. For God being *summum bonum, unum et idem* [the Supreme Good, One and Unchangeable], can take no disparagement by any relation; we are all sheep to him: David and kings, St. Peter and all, all fain to say, The Lord is my Shepherd; or else can never truly say, *I shall not want*.

It is a great happiness for sheep to have a good shepherd, but a greater happiness to have him both good and able. Many shepherds are the one and not the other; few are both; indeed none are both—none able to secure from want but only the Shepherd who is *Elohim Shaddai*, God All-sufficient. Kings no doubt are able shepherds, but yet not able to secure from want: for we see them oftentimes to be in want themselves. St. Peter an able shepherd, yet not so able as to secure from want; for who knows not what want he was in himself when time was? We shall never be sheep secure from want till we come to say, The Lord is my Shepherd; and then we may justly infer we shall not want.

Indeed, God is a Shepherd as able as he is good, and as good as he is able. *For he leadeth me into green pastures*² [ver. 2]. Not only he hath green pastures to lead me into, which shows his ability, but he leads me into them, which shows his goodness. He leads me not into pastures that

¹ Ps. lxxvii. 20. ² Ps. xxiii. 2: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters."

are withered and dry, that would distaste me before I taste them ; but he leads me into green pastures, as well to please my eye with the verdure as my stomach with the herbage, and inviting me, as it were, to eat, by setting out the meat in the best colour. A meat though never so good, yet if it look not handsomely, it dulls the appetite ; but when besides the goodness it hath also a good look, this gives the appetite another edge, and makes a joy before enjoying. But yet the goodness is not altogether in the greenness. Alas, green is but a colour, and colours are but deceitful things : they might be green leaves, or they might be green flags or rushes ; and what good were to me in such a greenness ? No, my soul, the goodness is in being green pastures, for now they perform as much as they promise ; and as in being green they were a comfort to me as soon as I saw them, so in being green pastures they are a refreshing to me now as soon as I taste them. As they are pleasant to look on, so they are wholesome to feed on ; as they are sweet to be tasted, so they are easy to be digested ; that I am now methinks in a kind of Paradise, and seem not to want anything, unless perhaps a little water with which now and then to wash my mouth, at most to take sometimes a sip ; for though sheep be no great drinkers, and though their pastures being green and full of sap make drink the less needful, yet some drink they must have besides. And now see the great goodness of this Shepherd, and what just cause there is to depend upon his providence ; for he lets not his sheep want this neither, but he leads them *beside still waters*,—not waters that roar and make a noise enough to fright a fearful sheep, but waters still and quiet, that though they drink but little, yet they may drink that little without fear. And may I not justly say now, The Lord is my shepherd ; I shall not want ?

And yet perhaps there will be want for all this ; for is it enough that he lead them into green pastures and beside still waters ? May he not lead them in, and presently take them out again, before their bellies be half full ; and so, instead of making them happy, make them more miserable ; set them in a longing with the sight, and then frustrate them

of their expectation? No, my soul, the measure of this Shepherd's goodness is more than so; he not only leadeth them into green pastures, but he makes them to lie down in them. He leads them not in to post over their meat, as if they were to eat a passover, and to take it *in transitu* [while passing onward], as dogs drink Nile; but he makes them to lie down in green pastures, that they may eat their fill and feed at leisure; and when they have done, lie down and take their ease, that their after-reckoning may be as pleasing as their repast, and that they may be free from being *soliciti de crastino* for taking care to provide for to-morrow, seeing they have a market of provision round about them, or rather their meat ready dressed to their hands for many days to come. O my soul, thus are the godly provided for by the Lord their Shepherd; and though their pastures may seem withered and dry in the eyes of the world, yet to them they are green and pleasing, and give more gladness to their hearts than theirs whose corn and wine most abundantly increaseth.¹ And now, O my soul, is it not time now to say grace, and to acknowledge a thankfulness for this plenty of my meat and drink? And can I say a shorter grace than this: The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want?

And yet perhaps there will be want for all this; for if God be a Shepherd, will he not shear his sheep? And if he shear me, will he not leave me bare and naked? And how then can I say, I shall not want? God, indeed, is a Shepherd that will shear his sheep, but he will *tondere* [shear], not *deglubere* [flay]; he will take off our old clothes, but it is to make way for new; and he takes them off in a time when we may well spare them, indeed in a time when it is better for us to be without them, and therefore neither is his shearing any cause but I may say still, The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.

And yet I say still there will perhaps be want for all this; for is it enough to have food and raiment? is it enough to have ease and plenty? Alas, all these do but serve for the body; there is no provision here for the soul; and if the

¹ Ps. iv. 7: "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time *that* their corn and their wine increased."

soul be not provided for, all the rest is but the care of Martha, troubled about many things, and none of them needful.¹ But he that told Martha of her error, is it like he will commit the like error himself? No, my soul, his principal care is of the soul, for *he restoreth my soul*² [ver. 3]; but as he made me not a living soul at first till he had made the earth, and the fruits of the earth to serve for my living, so he restores not my soul now till he hath first led me into green pastures to serve for my sustenance; for to what purpose were it to give a new life, and not a living, to give a being, and not give means to maintain that being? And was it not perhaps from hence that Christ took his pattern when he taught us to pray for daily bread before we pray for forgiveness of sins? But though he provide first for the body, which was made first, yet he provides most for the soul, which was given last; he but feeds my body, but he restores my soul; he ministers to my body but accidental and outward things, but inward and substantial to my soul. And why is it that God provides more for the soul than for the body, but because the soul is of far more worth than the body? for God is not as man, to take care of things out of fancy or upon mistaking; but he takes care of things according as he values them, and values them according as they are worth, *Numquid cura Deo de bobus?*—Doth God take care of oxen?³ Indeed the soul, in comparison of the body, is of far more value than the worth of an ox in comparison of a man. Oh that we could be so wise as to know the true value and worth of the soul, and to take care of things according to their values! We should then certainly be more careful of the soul, less careful of the body than we are, and be more sensible of that saying of Christ, What avails it a man to gain the whole world and to lose his soul?⁴ It may be allowed perhaps to men to provide first for the body, so they would provide most for the soul, as God doth here; but to provide first and most for the body, and last and least for the soul, as most

¹ Luke x. 40, 41. ² Ps. xxiii. 3: "He restoreth my soul: he leadeeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." ³ 1 Cor. ix. 9. ⁴ Matt. xvi. 26: "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

men do,—I say not, all for the body and nothing for the soul, as some men do,—this must needs be extremely against all good order, seeing it is so directly against God's order.

But to what is it that God restores my soul? It must be to something that my soul had before, and hath not now; and so it is. He restores it to its original purity that was now grown foul and black with sin; for, alas, what good were it to have green pastures and a black soul! He restores it to its natural temper in affections that was grown distempered with violence of passions; for, alas, what good were it to have still waters and turbulent spirits! He restores it indeed to life that was grown before in a manner quite dead; and who could restore my soul to life but he only that is the good Shepherd, and gave his life for his sheep, which no shepherd ever did but he. St. Peter laid down his life, but he gave not his life, for he would perhaps have kept it if he might; and he laid it not down either as a shepherd for his sheep, but as a sheep rather for his shepherd; but this Shepherd gave his life for his sheep,¹ gave it, *quia oportuit* indeed, because it was necessary he should give it; but yet, *quia voluit* too, because he would give it; for if it had not been voluntary, it could not have been acceptable; and if not acceptable, never certainly have served for a ransom; and if not ransoming, no restoring.

But is it not said the Shepherd was smitten and the sheep were scattered? and what was his smiting but the giving his life? and had he not done better to have kept his life, than, leaving it, to leave his sheep to scattering? O my soul, though they were scattered for a time, yet it was but to be gathered together again with the greater joy; for though he left his life, yet he left not his sheep, but had a care of them even in death; for he had power to lay down his life, and power to take it up again; and as he laid it down for his sheep's ransom, so he took it up for their justification.

Every shepherd knows that sheep are subject to many infirmities, and knows many infirmities to which they are

¹ John x. 11, 15—18.

subject, and therefore is never without his box of tar, as the best remedy in cases of danger ; but if the danger pass his tar-box, and touch upon the life, he then gives them over, and lets nature work. But the Lord is a Shepherd of another nature, above the power of nature. He restoreth the soul when the life is in danger ; he hath ways of curing which no shepherd knows of but himself ; and if other helps fail, he need but to say, *Volo, sis sanus*—I will, be thou whole,¹ and without any tar-box it is a present remedy. And may I not now justly say, The Lord is my Shepherd ; I shall not want ?

And yet perhaps there will be want for all this, for is it enough that he restore my soul and then leave me ? What is it to restore my soul but to put it *in statu quo prius*—in the state it was made at first, which was after the image of God in holiness and righteousness ; and if I could not continue in this state when made in it, how shall I continue in it when restored to it ? He will therefore supply this want too, for having restored my soul in righteousness, *he will lead me in the paths of righteousness*, that though, left to myself, I took a wrong guide and went astray, yet when he leads me that is the way itself, I may be sure I cannot possibly go out of the way.

But alas, O Lord, these paths of righteousness have a long time so little been frequented, that all prints of a path are almost clean worn out, that it is a hard matter now but to find where the paths lie ; and if we can find them, yet they are so narrow and so full of rubs that without special assistance it is an impossible thing not to fall or go astray. Even some angels, and those no mean ones, were not able to go right in these paths of righteousness,² but for want of leading went awry and perished. Oh therefore, thou the great Shepherd of my soul, as thou art pleased of thy grace to lead me into them, so vouchsafe with thy grace to lead me in them ; for though in themselves they be paths of righteousness, yet to me they will be but paths of error, if thou vouchsafe not as well to lead me in them as into them. Oh, the

¹ Matt. viii. 3 : "I will, be thou clean ;" also Mark i. 41, Luke v. 13.

² Jude 6.

comfortable paths of righteousness,—the very paths in which Enoch walked with God,¹ and which, walked in as they should be, will bring us to a better Paradise than that of our first parents. For if God lead us in these paths, these paths will lead us to the place where the goats shall be put on the left hand and the sheep be taken on the right,² that now I am certainly come to the highest cause of my glorying to say, The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want; for at his right hand is the fulness of joy for evermore.³

But why is it that this great Shepherd will do these great things for me? Is it because he finds me to be a sounder sheep and to have fewer blemishes upon me than some other? Alas, no; for I am nothing but blemishes and unsoundness all over; but he will do it for his name's sake; for seeing he hath taken upon him the name of a good Shepherd, he will discharge his part, whatever his sheep be. It is not their being bad sheep that can make him leave being a good Shepherd; but he will be good, and maintain the credit of his name, in spite of all their badness; and though no benefit come to them of it, yet there shall glory accrue to him by it, and his name shall nevertheless be magnified and extolled.

But now, O my soul, though I can say I shall not want, yet can I say I shall not fear? for is not fear an inseparable companion of mortality? and can I then choose but fear that know myself to be mortal, and know also what the condition is of being mortal? Not only that I may die, but that I must die; and not only must one day, but may this day—alas, this very minute! I fear indeed when I consider my own frailty; but when I consider that the Lord is my Shepherd, I then am armed against all fear—against this fear of death itself. He that makes me to walk in green pastures, and in paths of righteousness, and keeps me from want, he also leads me by the hand as I walk, and keeps me from fear; *Yea, though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil*⁴ [ver. 4]. Though I be brought to never

¹ Gen. v. 24. ² Matt. xxv. 33. ³ Ps. xvi. 11: "In thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore." ⁴ Ps. xxiii. 4: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

so great extremity,—though brought as low as the valley of death,—though brought as near to death as the shadow to the body,—though brought to walk as a ghost amongst the dead, yet I will fear no evil. The shadow of death may perhaps be far enough from it, for all our life is but the shadow of death ; but the valley of the shadow must needs be close to death, as being the very entrance to it ; yet if I were brought to this door of death—if brought within the door and compassed about with death, yet for all this, for all that can be said or done, I will fear no evil. Will you not—will you not fear evil, when the evil is so imminent and the danger so great ? Is the face of death no more terrible but that you dare look upon it without fear ? Though it be the reproach of the wicked to fear where there is no cause of fear,¹ yet not to fear where there is cause can be no commendation in the godly. And why then will David speak thus, more like a desperate man than one that were well advised ? No doubt David will give good reason for that he speaks. As it were desperateness not to fear where there is imminent danger, so it were cowardice to fear where there is imminent comfort. Lay then the comfort to the danger, and you will easily excuse David for fearing no evil. You have seen the danger, now hear the comfort : The Lord, my Shepherd, *is with me*, for he is never absent from his flock ; *his rod and his staff they comfort me* ; and may they not justly comfort me, when with them he is able to recover a sheep, though falling down the steepest precipice, or though already in the wolf's mouth, or in the paws of the lion. Indeed, if I had not my Shepherd with me, or if my Shepherd had not his instruments with him, I might justly then be in fear of evil ; but what evil can I fear now, when I have my Shepherd, and my Shepherd his instruments—his rod and his staff, both instruments of comfort ; and not only of comfort, but of encouragement ; both instruments of preserving.

But is it well understood what his rod and his staff mean ? for they may as well be instruments of correcting as defending ; and if of defending, there is then just cause they should

¹ Ps. liii. 5 : "There were they in great fear, *where* no fear was."

be comforts ; but if of correcting, what comforts can they be ? for what comfort can it be to be corrected ? O my soul, great comfort to me, that know the nature of this Shepherd as I do ; for do not I know that whom he loves he corrects ;¹ and, therefore, whom he corrects it is a certain argument that he loves ? Indeed, if the rod and the staff were in the hands of an enemy, I should then fear them as instruments for my evil ; but being in his hands that is my Shepherd, now they are but as my own weapons put into an abler hand, that can better manage them for my good than I could do myself. Could Moses with his rod fetch water out of a rock,² and shall not God with his rod bring comfort out of trouble ? Could Jacob with his staff pass over Jordan, and return enriched with herds of cattle,³ and shall not God's staff make me pass over the Jordan of this world, and bring me home with troops of joy ? Shall not his rod, though it wound me, comfort me, when I know he wounds but to the end he may apply a plaister ? Shall not his staff, though it beat me, comfort me, when it is but to beat the dust out of me, that am nothing but dust ? But, most of all, must not his rod needs comfort me, when it is his rod that makes me lie down in green pastures ? Must not his staff needs comfort me, when it his staff that keeps me right in the paths of righteousness ? O sweet rod, how can I choose but kiss thee ! dear staff, but embrace thee ! seeing it is long⁴ of you that his green pastures and his paths of righteousness do me any good ; for they would certainly do me hurt ; his green pastures would pamper up my flesh too much, his paths of righteousness would puff up my spirits too much, if his rod and his staff were not used as moderators. And if you think this strange, that the paths of righteousness should puff up the spirits, remember St. Paul, to whom there was given a thorn in the flesh, lest his walking in the paths of righteousness should puff him up.⁵ But if the rod and the staff, in these senses, may not be sufficient comfort to take away all cause of fear, at least there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse,⁶

¹ Heb. xii. 6 : "Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth." ² Exod. xvii. 6. ³ Gen. xxxii. 10. ⁴ Because. ⁵ 2 Cor. xii. 7. ⁶ Isa. xi. 1.

(indeed, to David in particular a special comfort,) that will certainly be sufficient against all fear, though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death; for this rod as a mountain shall fill up all valleys,¹ and as the substance shall fulfil all shadows,² and as the true life shall "swallow up death in victory."³ And is there not a staff that will do as much? the staff upon which Jacob leaned when he was a-dying?⁴ when he was indeed in the valley of the shadow of death? O my soul, having this staff of Jacob to lean upon, this rod of the stem of Jesse to be my comfort, I shall make myself unworthy of protection if I should fear any evil, though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death. For why should I fear death, which is but the parting of the soul from the body, seeing I cannot come to God with them both at once, but they must first be parted one from another? My soul cannot come to the light of life if my body be not first in the shadow of death; indeed but in the shadow, for the substance of death can never take hold upon it, if my soul be gone before to take possession of the light. Oh then vouchsafe, O God, to bring my soul first, and after it my body, out of the shadow of death, into the light of life; and then I shall have cause, just cause to say, and to glory in saying, *The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

But if it be doubted still how it can be that God's rod and his staff should be comforts to the godly, then mark the issue, and see what follows upon his rod and his staff: *Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over* [ver. 5]; for this is a sure rule with God, that his chastening always ends in cherishing: if he strike with his rod, and perhaps breaks the head with his staff, he gives oil presently to anoint it, and to make it whole again. If he make me to keep fasting-day to-day, he allows me a feast for it to-morrow, and then my cup shall run over.

Hitherto God hath vouchsafed to be a Shepherd, and David hath been his sheep; now God will be a Conqueror,

¹ Isa. xl. 4: "Every valley shall be exalted." ² Col. ii. 17: "Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." ³ Isa. xxv. 8. ⁴ Heb. xi. 21.

and David shall be a king. Now, God as a Conqueror will bestow favours on his friends, and disgraces upon his enemies; and therefore now the scene alters: where it was before in the field, it is now within doors; and where David before spake in the third person, he speaks now in the second: *Thou* preparest a table before me; and this is to feast his friends: In the presence of mine enemies; and this is to confound his enemies. To prepare a table before him is itself a favour; but the greatness of the favour is in this, that a table is prepared before him, in the presence of his enemies; for as there is no such joy of prosperity to the godly as when their enemies see the prosperity they are in,—it being a kind of revenge that God takes upon their enemies in their behalf,—so there is no such tragedy to the wicked as to be made spectators of the prosperity of the godly, it being the greatest affront that can be to their expectation to see them advanced whom they both hated and despised. Could Haman have had a greater affliction than to see Mordecai advanced, and himself forced to be an instrument in his advancing?¹ *Videbunt quem transfixerunt*—They shall see him whom they pierced, shall be one of the miseries, and perhaps one of the greatest in hell itself.

And now is David a king, and as a king hath honour and plenty: Thou anointest my head with oil, this is his honour; My cup runneth over, this is his plenty; that where he said before, The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want; he may as justly say now, The Lord is my rewarder, I shall abound.

But is it not that in the person of David here, there is a reference to Christ himself, seeing it is all verified in him that is spoken here? He that hungered so long, till Satan thought he could have eaten stones,² hath now a table prepared before him,—a table where the godly shall sit, and eat with him in his kingdom.³ He that had enemies insulting over him, hath now all his enemies made his foot-stool;⁴ Sin and Death, Satan and his members, lie prostrate under him. He that had his head pricked with thorns,

¹ Esth. vi. 11, 12. ² Rev. i. 7: "Every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him." ³ Matt. iv. 3. ⁴ Luke xxii. 30. ⁵ Heb. x. 13.

hath now his head anointed with oil, with the oil of gladness above his fellows.¹ He that thirsted, and could get but vinegar to drink,² hath now such plenty that his cup runneth over: all power is given him both in heaven and earth.³ At least in the person of David there will be relation to all the godly: now Lazarus, that could not get so much as crumbs from Dives' table,⁴ shall have a table himself prepared before him; now Dives, that fared deliciously every day, shall be glad to stand waiting at Lazarus' table⁵ for a drop of water; that the godly may well be content to be in penury awhile, seeing they shall have a table ere long prepared before them; they may well be content to let their enemies be masters awhile, seeing they shall have them ere long to be waiters upon them; they may well be content to hang down their heads for awhile, seeing their heads ere long shall be anointed with oil; they may well be content to have hard measure for a time, seeing the time will be shortly that their cup shall run over. And now, O my soul, will not all this serve to comfort thee in this vale of misery? Art thou 'so besotted on things present, as to have no consideration, to make no valuation of things to come, and to come so shortly,—so shortly all, that they are put in the present tense, as if they were come already?

But if David cannot overrule thee as a king, let him at least persuade thee as a prophet; for now you shall have him a prophet and a votary; and this is his prophecy: *Surely mercy and goodness shall follow me all the days of my life*;⁶ and this is his vow: *I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever* [ver. 6].

But is David's prophecy like to be true? will mercy and goodness follow him all the days of his life? O my soul, it was true in David; it shall be true in all the godly; for whom God loveth, he loveth to the end;⁷ and mercy and goodness shall follow them all the days of their life,—mercy to commiserate, and goodness to relieve; mercy to bear

¹ Heb. i. 9. ² John xix. 29, 30. ³ Matt. xxviii. 18. ⁴ Luke xvi. 21: "Desiring to be fed with the crumbs," etc. ⁵ Luke xvi. 24. ⁶ Auth. Vers., "Goodness and mercy." ⁷ Jer. xxxi. 3: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love."

with infirmities, and goodness to supply wants ; mercy to be an assistant in adversity, and goodness to be a governor in prosperity. Alas, O Lord, if thy mercy should not follow me, thy justice would ; if thy goodness should not follow me, thy vengeance would ; and then one that were no prophet might easily foretell the miserable estate I should be in, as now that mercy and goodness follow me, one that is no prophet may easily tell the happy condition I shall be in. Although this perhaps be not so much a prophecy as a faith in David, at least [it is] a prophecy which all the godly may make to themselves by faith, to be assured of the mercy and goodness of God ; and not to follow them for a time, and then give over, but to follow them all the days of their life. But what ! no longer than all the days of their life, and then leave them ? No, my soul, but all the days of that life, that shall never leave them. Oh the comfortable doctrine of faith ! far more comfortable than heathen philosophy ever knew, for that went no further than *Ante obitum nemo* [Before his death no man (should be called happy)], as though no man could be happy till his death, where by this it appears that men may be happy while they live ; for if a man be then happy, when the mercy and goodness of God follow him, as certainly a greater happiness there cannot be : then seeing they surely follow the godly all the days of their life, surely a godly man is happy while he lives. But then the sureness is long¹ of the mercy, and not of the man ; for it seems he would go far enough from it if mercy did not follow him ; but now that he is followed by mercy and goodness, he cannot go so fast from them but they will overtake him and make him happy. O merciful God, so frame my heart that I may not fly from thy mercy, and put it to follow me ; at least let it so follow me that it may overtake me, for then I shall have the happiness to be able to keep my vow, that I will dwell in thy house for ever ; but rather I shall have the favour, as an effect of thy mercy, that I shall dwell in thy house for ever. For

¹ Because.

if this be a vow, it is a strange one, where all the benefit is to him that makes the vow, and none at all to whom it is made ; for what is it to God whether I dwell in his house or no ? such vowers God may have enough. O my soul, to vow to dwell in God's house is to vow to be his servant ; and to be his servant is to serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life ;¹ and though this service be no benefit to God, as indeed no more is anything I can do, for my goodness extendeth not to him, yet the vow to be his servant being well performed, will be more acceptable to him than if I should vow as Jephtha did, to sacrifice his only daughter.²

But we need not stand to justify David's vow, for it seems not so much a vow of David to God as a favour of God to David, that when his mercy hath followed him all the days of his life, he will take him afterwards to live with himself ; and though his body for a time be cast out of doors, yet his soul shall presently be received into his house, there to dwell with him and his angels, not as a servant, but as a son ; seeing none but sons abide in the house for ever,³ which in the person of David is no less the portion and may be as well the comfort of all the godly, and is but the expressing of that, in a higher strain, which was said at first in a lower style : *The Lord is my shepherd ; I shall not want.*

¹ Luke i. 74, 75.² Judg. xi. 31, 34, 35.³ John viii. 35.

The LORD *is* my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD *is* the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? 2. When the wicked, *even* mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. 3. Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this *will* I *be* confident. 4. One *thing* have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple. 5. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. 6. And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD. 7. Hear, O LORD, *when* I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me. 8. *When thou saidst*, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek. 9. Hide not thy face *far* from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. 10. When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up. 11. Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies. 12. Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty. 13. *I had fainted*, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. 14. Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.—PSALM xxvii. (Auth. Ver.)

MEDITATIONS

UPON

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH PSALM.

LIGHT which makes all things visible was the first made of all visible things;¹ and whether God did it for our example or no, I know not, but ever since, in imitation of this manner of God's proceeding, the first thing we do when we intend to do anything is to get us light. Indeed light is not only a director, but a comforter; and nothing naturally strikes so much terror as darkness, for when we are in the dark, not only we are apt to take into our fancies all frightful objects, but we know not how to take our steps for fear of walls and thresholds. It is every one's case to have the sun for his light, but it is not every one's happiness to have God for his light; and, alas, if I should trust to the sun for light, I should be left in darkness every day, at least at night. But God is a sun that never sets;² he is light himself, he is light itself;³ and therefore it is good trusting to God for light, for so I shall be sure neither day nor night to be left in darkness.⁴ O thou great Creator of light, thou light of all creatures, vouchsafe to shine upon me, and to lighten my darkness,⁵ that neither any objects of terror may make me to tremble, nor any thresholds of error may make me to stumble, but that I may walk securely in the confidence of this, *The Lord is my light*⁶ [ver. 1]; for of what then, *of whom now, should I be afraid?*

¹ Gen. i. 3. ² Ps. lxxxiv. 12; Isa. lx. 20. ³ 1 John i. 5. ⁴ John xii. 46: "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness." ⁵ 2 Sam. xxii. 29. ⁶ Ps. xxvii. 1: "The LORD *is* my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD *is* the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

But is it enough that God be my light? what if I myself be blind? what good then will his light do me? It is true; and therefore David stays not here, but *Deus illuminatio mea*,¹ God is my enlightening too. He is both my light and my sight; my light by which to see, and my sight with which to see; my light to make walls and thresholds visible, and my sight to make me able to avoid them. If it were not for light, I should be always in the dark; if it were not for sight, I should be dark myself. No illumination without both; and never both, but only from God. There is one, indeed, who hath gotten him a name, to be called Lucifer [light-bringer],² as though it were he that brought us light, when God knows but for him we should have had no darkness. Yet he pretends to both, both to light and to enlightening; but, alas, his light is but imposture, his enlightening but illusion; for as he can transform himself into an angel of light,³ so he can transform the light itself, and make it seem light when it is indeed dark; and therefore his light can never make walls and thresholds to be truly visible, and as little can his enlightening make us able to avoid them. For this was tried in our first parents, who upon his enlightening had their eyes opened indeed, but opened to see good and evil,⁴ not to distinguish good from evil, and therefore could not enable them, cannot us, to avoid the evil. But as they that follow his light do stumble and fall at the threshold of error, so they that are led by his enlightening do run their heads against the walls of impiety: no avoiding of walls and thresholds, no shunning the snares of Satan, the illusions of this Lucifer, but only by saying, if truly saying, *Deus illuminatio mea*, God is my enlightening; and then we may safely infer, of what, of whom, should I be afraid?

Indeed, David might well say, *Deus illuminatio mea*, God is my enlightening, seeing God had enlightened him, not only to see, but to be a seer, which is a prophet; but what is this to us, who are far from any such enlightening, to see as prophets? O my soul, it is enough for us that Christ

¹ This is the Vulgate rendering of the opening words of this Psalm. ² Isa. xiv. 12.
³ 2 Cor. xi. 14. ⁴ Gen. iii. 5.

is the great seer in whose light we shall see light;¹ and though David were of the Jews, and we be of the Gentiles, yet as Christ was the glory of his people Israel, so he is a light to lighten the Gentiles;² and therefore *Deus illuminatio mea*—God is my enlightening, as fit for us to say as it was for David.

But doth God's enlightening serve only for a safeguard against walls and thresholds? Alas, the light of the sun and the enlightening of Nature would serve to do this, and what need we then to seek any other? O my soul, there are spiritual walls and thresholds which no sun can make us see, which Nature herself is not able to see; only God's enlightening hath the influence to do it. There is a wall of sin, the partition wall between God and us,³ the wall that bars us from having access to God; and this wall the natural man sees not, neither can see; illumination only makes it visible. There is a threshold of pride in the heart of man, a swelling of self-love that lies in the way we are to pass, and is a cause of stumbling if not avoided; and this threshold the natural man sees not, neither can see: only God's illumination makes able to see it. And many other walls and thresholds there are which without illumination can never be seen, and not seen can never be avoided, and not avoided are cause of falling into endless perdition. And as illumination makes us to see these sights of terror, so it makes us to see also sights of comfort: it makes us see death lie dead before us, and swallowed up in victory;⁴ it makes us see the powers of hell astonished, as not able to endure the lustre of this light; it makes us see the doors of heaven open, into which by virtue of this light we have means to enter; it makes us see him that is invisible,⁵ God himself that is our enlightening, in whose presence is the fulness of joy for evermore;⁶ and of whom then, of what now, should I be afraid?

These indeed be comfortable sights, but what comfort for me to see them if I be not sure I shall enjoy them? and how can I be any more sure to enjoy them than the angels that fell?⁷ For they had illumination in a greater measure than

¹ Ps. xxxvi. 9. ² Luke ii. 32. ³ Eph. ii. 14: "The middle wall of partition."
⁴ Isa. xxv. 8. ⁵ Heb. xl. 27. ⁶ Ps. xvi. 11 ⁷ Jude 6.

I can hope to have it, and yet for all their illumination they stumbled at the threshold of pride, and ran their heads against the wall of sin, and utterly lost, alas, have lost for ever all benefit of all these comfortable sights. All this is true, and therefore David stays not here neither, but *Deus illuminatio mea, et salus mea*,—God is my enlightening, and my salvation too; and this he was not to the angels that fell: he left them at illumination, never conducted them to salvation, for if he had done this their illumination had never been turned into darkness; either they had not stumbled at all, or at least not so stumbled as to fall.¹ If God were only my illumination, I should by that light go to *Video meliora proboque* [I see and approve the better], but should presently follow it with *deteriora sequor* [I follow the worse]; but when he is my salvation too, this makes me break off at *deteriora sequor*; and where God was heard to say, *Perditio tua ex te, O Israel*,² Thy destruction is from thyself, O Israel; now to hear him say, *Ego autem salus tua*, but I am thy salvation. If my illumination reflected upon myself to make me seem bright in my own eyes, as though I had something which I had not received, then indeed I should be in the case of the angels that fell, for so did they; but now that my illumination reflects upon God, and makes me see all goodness to be originally in him,—none in myself but what he is pleased to impart or impute unto me,—now illumination becomes a step to salvation; and as they are free indeed³ whom the Spirit frees, so they are safe indeed whom God saves; and of what then, of whom now, should I be afraid?

But though God be my salvation, yet this perhaps may be only in the life to come; and if it be no more but so, I may do ill enough in this present life for all his salvation in the next; and have I not cause then to be afraid? To free thee therefore of this scruple, David stays not here neither; but, God is my salvation and *the strength of my life* too; not only of my life to come, which will be strong of itself, but of my present life, which hath no strength but in him. Or rather, seeing

¹ Rom. xi. 11: "Have they stumbled that they should fall?" ² Hosea xiii. 9: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself." ³ John viii. 36: "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

godliness hath the promise of both lives, both of this life and the life to come,¹ the first shall be first served; and then, if God be the strength of my present life, there shall be in it no present weakness; and if no weakness, there need be no fear; and of what then, of whom now, should I be afraid?

But though God's strength be sufficient to defend me if I had no enemies² [ver. 2], or if I were to fight but a single combat, yet can it be sufficient to preserve me when an army of enemies assault me at once? and can I choose but fear when I know myself unable to resist? O my soul, take heed thou be not in the number of those to whom it was said, What fear ye, O ye of little faith?³ For what can an army do against the arm of God? what can all might do against him that is almighty? Have my enemies any strength but what they have from God? and can they have any strength from him against me, when he employs his strength against them for me? No, my soul, *though an host encamp against me, though war be made upon me*⁴ [ver. 3], yet as long as God is the strength of my life, it is neither their multitude nor their malice that can hurt me; but rather their very malice is the means their multitude cannot hurt me, for malice hinders illumination, and makes them they cannot see their way, that when they came upon me and thought they had me sure enough, even then I was sure enough from their having; for he that is the strength of my life had laid a block in their way, which for want of illumination they saw not, at which they stumbled and fell.

But yet it is a grievous thing to have cannibals for one's enemies; and such my enemies seem to be: they seek not more to destroy me than devour me; they came upon me to eat up my flesh as if I had been their shambles; it is not enough they could kill me, but they could find in their hearts to eat me; they are not satisfied with procuring my death, if they be not themselves actors in it; it is not enough for them to have my blood, unless their own hands be

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 8. ² Ps. xxvii. 2: "When the wicked, *even* mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, *they* stumbled and fell." ³ Matt. viii. 26: "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith." ⁴ Ps. xxvii. 4: "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this *will* I be confident."

imbrued in it; indeed there is no such dainty dish to a malicious stomach as the flesh of an enemy; it goes down without chewing, and they swallow it up whole like cormorants. But though malice have a ravenous stomach, yet she hath but slow digestion; though her teeth be sharp, yet her feet are lame, at least apt to stumble; and this made well for David, for when his enemies came upon him to eat up his flesh, because they came upon the feet of malice they stumbled and fell.¹ A man may stumble, and yet not fall; but to stumble and fall withal is the proper stumbling of the wicked, and especially of the maliciously wicked; and such, it seems, was the stumbling of David's enemies, because his enemies were such; and such I doubt not shall be the stumbling of my enemies, because mine are such; and of what then, of whom now, should I be afraid?

But to the end I may have some exercise for my illumination, that it stand not idle, and may have some testimony for my salvation, that it grow not doubtful, there is *one thing I have desired of the LORD, and that I will seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his holy temple*² [ver. 4]. This beholding of God's beauty will be a continual exercise for my illumination, and this enquiring in God's holy temple will give me assurance of my salvation.

It were very hard, if David making but one request to God, that God should deny him; for hath he not bidden us to ask, and we should have?³ and could David ask less than to ask but one thing? No, my soul, God denied it not to David, nor will deny it to thee, nor to any other that shall ask it in faith, and specially if he ask it to so good an end as David doth here, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his holy temple.

But seeing David would make but one request to God, why would he not make a greater? for, alas, what a poor

¹ Ps. xxvii. 2. ² Ps. xxvii. 4: "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple." (A.V.) ³ Matt. vii. 7.

request is this, to desire to dwell in God's house? and what to do? but only to see? and to see what? but only a beauty, a fading thing; at most but to enquire; and what is enquiring but only to hear news, a vain fancy? and what cause in any of these why David should make it his request to God? But mark, O my soul, what goes with it; take altogether, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his holy temple; and now tell me if there be, tell me if there can be, any greater request to be made, any greater cause to be earnest about it? For though worldly beauty be a fading thing, yet the beauty of the Lord shall continue when the world itself shall fade away; and though enquiring after news be a vain fancy, yet to enquire in God's temple is the way to learn there is no new thing under the sun,¹ and there it was that Solomon learned that all is vanity.² Indeed, this one thing that David desires is in effect that *unum necessarium*³ [one thing needful] that Christ speaks of in the Gospel, which Mary made choice of there as David doth here; and I may say it is that precious jewel which the rich merchant sold all he had to buy,⁴ and had his bargain commended by Christ himself. Oh how happy were we if we could bound our desires within the compass of things necessary; for all our misery grows from this, that our desires have no certain dwelling, but wander and range about from one object to another like vagabonds from place to place; and no help there will be for it till our desire arrive at that which is the best; for as long as there is any better to be had, the desire will never leave desiring, and where is that best to be had but in him only that is only good,⁵ in him indeed that is the only good; and seeing there can be no happiness till the desire be settled, and the desire will never be settled till we come at God, therefore no means so likely to make us happy as to dwell in God's house, for there we are sure we shall be with him; and once with him, never have desire to anything besides him.⁶

There are other houses which, in worldly considerations and to worldly minds, may seem as convenient, and perhaps

¹ Eccles. i. 9. ² Eccles. i. 2. ³ Luke x. 42. ⁴ Matt. xiii. 46. ⁵ Luke xviii. 19. ⁶ Ps. lxxiii. 25: "There is none upon earth that I desire beside thee."

be more profitable to dwell in, than this house of God ; but that which makes me so desirous to dwell here rather than anywhere else, is partly for the prospect, that I may behold the beauty of the Lord, and partly for instruction, that I may enquire in his holy temple. For there is not such a prospect again in the world as this : not on the mount where Christ was showed all the kingdoms of the earth, and the glory of them ;¹ nor such another place for instruction as here : not all the schools of philosophers, not all the oracles of the heathen, in any degree to be compared with it.

And what then is this beauty of God which David is so desirous to behold ? what this house of God, in which he desires to dwell ? There is a beauty of God in his creatures most glorious indeed, and most worthy of beholding, but yet this needs no dwelling in God's house to see it ; we may see it as well dwelling anywhere else ; but there is a beauty of God in himself, a beauty which, if once we see, we shall never be willing to take our eyes off ; a beauty which the more we see the more we shall see cause to desire to see it ; a beauty which, without special illumination, neither the eyes of men are able to behold, nor the tongues of angels to express ; and this beauty is nowhere to be seen but in God's house, and not there neither but by dwelling in it. It is not for every one that comes in as a stranger to see this beauty ; they must be dwellers in it, continual and constant frequenters of it, or they are never like to be admitted to behold it. There is, indeed, in all the creatures of God, in some more eminently, a certain tincture² of this beauty, and is perhaps that which deceives us in the estimating of our happiness, because we take tincture for substance, and fix ourselves upon that which is made but only for a passage. For tinctures, though they please for a time, yet they soon wear out and decay ; no solidness nor durableness but in the substance itself, and no substance of beauty but only in God ; and therefore the truest happiness, indeed all true happiness, in only the beholding of this beauty. And if any man doubt of this, because seeing is but the satisfaction of one sense,

¹ Mat. iv. 8.² A colouring, stain or dye.

and happiness gives satisfaction at least to all the senses, let him then hear what David in another place says: *Videte et gustate, quam suavis est Dominus*,—See and taste how sweet the Lord is.¹ For in this seeing, not only the tasting, but all the senses are united—at least the pleasures of all the senses are comprised; and the rather if we consider that beholding hath a pre-eminence above seeing, for where seeing may be *in transitu* [in passing] only, beholding implies a permanence, and a fixing our eyes upon it, and such is the seeing that is the essential sense of happiness.

And what then is this house of God in which David desires to dwell? Hath God any other house than heaven? and would David dwell in heaven whilst he is dwelling upon earth? Will nothing serve his turn but to ask God for impossibilities? Indeed heaven is God's throne, but heaven and earth both are full of the majesty of his glory,² and therefore God hath a house on earth too, a house dedicate to the honour of his name; and David justly makes his prayer for this house because indeed it is the house of prayer,³ and no rent paid for dwelling in it but only prayer: oh then make me able, O God, to pay thee this rent, and I shall never doubt of continuing thy tenant in this house, to behold thy beauty, and to enquire in thy holy temple.

But why should David make it a suit to God to dwell in his house, seeing God leaves the doors open, that every one may come and dwell in it that will? O my soul, it is not simply to dwell in it, but so to dwell in it that he may see God's beauty? and this cannot be seen without illumination, and no illumination but of God's donation. For indeed this dwelling is a spiritual living, a donative⁴ only in God's gift; and justly therefore David makes it his suit to have his induction,⁵ but an induction only while we live here; no perfect possession till another life, but he that seeks not his induction here must never look for possession hereafter.

¹ Ps. xxxiv. 8: "O taste and see that the Lord is good." ² Te Deum; cf. Isa. vi. 3: The whole earth is full of his glory." ³ Matt. xxi. 13. ⁴ "A donative, a largesse or benevolence bestowed upon the soldiers by the Roman emperors; it is now used for a dole, gift, or present made by a prince or nobleman. (Bailey's Dict.)"
⁵ "Induction (in law) putting a clerk in possession of his church, by leading him into it, and delivering him the keys." (Bailey's Dict.)

As to behold the beauty of God is one great benefit of dwelling in God's house, so it is another no less to enquire in his holy temple: as that beholding gives a satisfaction to our eyes, so this enquiry to our minds. When David saw the prosperity of the wicked, he was so amazed that he knew not what to make of it till he entered into God's holy temple and enquired;¹ and there he presently learned what God's meaning is in it, and why he suffers it to be so. What knowledge so necessary as the knowledge of sin? yet St. Paul confesseth he had not known what sin is but for the law;² and where is the law to be learned but enquiring in God's holy temple? and, indeed, if there be any scruple of conscience, if any doubtfulness of mind, if any difficulty of question concerning either God or ourselves, either the life present or the life to come, by enquiring in God's holy temple, it is presently cleared and resolved; for there are the oracles kept which serve to instruct, to teach, to reprove, that the man of God may be perfect in every good work.³

And amongst all the great mysteries which are learned by enquiring in God's holy temple, this is one of special comfort to me, that when I am in trouble, if his house that I dwell in be not sufficient to defend me, *He will hide me in his own pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle will he hide me; he will set me upon a rock*⁴ [ver. 5]; that one way or other he will be sure, and I may be sure, he will set me in safety.

But how can God hide me in his pavilion, which lies open to all men, and where every man may enter and find me? He will then, rather than fail, hide me in the secret of his tabernacle, which is shut against all men, and where none enters but himself. But yet his tabernacle may be burnt with fire, may be blown up with powder, blown down with wind; and what safety then in the secret of his tabernacle? He will then, if that fail, set me upon a rock,—and a rock is subject to none of these,—that so at least neither fire, nor sword, nor tempest of wind may prevail against me. Or is

¹ Ps. lxxiii. 26, 27: "When I thought to know this, it *was* too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; *then* understood I their end." ² Rom. vii. 7. ³ 2 Tim. iii. 16. ⁴ Ps. xxvii. 5: "For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock."

it that, being once admitted to dwell in God's house, I shall have not only the protection of a servant, for his *tegere* [hiding] is *protegere* [protection], but the advancement also of a favourite to be set upon a rock, for this, as it is a safety, is no less an honour? Or is it that, lest mine enemies should think it were done for fear of them that he hides me, he will set me upon a rock, as it were in defiance; and though some may be so bold to enter the secret of his tabernacle, yet none will be so desperate to venture upon a rock, against which all they can do is but to dash themselves in pieces,¹ and to hasten their own ruin?

And now, O my soul, how canst thou doubt of thy being in safety, having the three great fortresses of God for thy defence: his general providence, which is his pavilion; then his special mercy, which is the secret of his tabernacle; then the mediation of Christ, who is the Rock, upon which, when thou art set, neither the raging of the sea nor the blustering of the wind need to fright thee; for though they roar against thee, yet they cannot hurt thee;² and of whom then, of what now, should I be afraid?

For being set upon this rock, *My head shall be lifted up above mine enemies round about me*³ [ver. 6]. Though my feet may be in the water, yet my head shall be above water;⁴ I shall be in no danger, though perhaps in some trouble; and in no trouble neither but such as while my head is lifted up I may freely laugh at and despise; and the rather for that, though my enemies be so many as to be round about me, yet they are so mean as to be all below me,—not mean in themselves, but mean through him that hath lifted up my head above them. If mine enemies were but low, it were no great matter to be higher than they; but to have my head lifted up above them who carry their heads so high as to think none their equals, this must needs be as well to me a cause of joy, as in thee, O God, an effect of power. In thy lifting up my head, I regard not so much the honour as the

¹ Matt. xxi. 44: "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken." * Matt. vii. 25. * Ps. xxvii. 6: "And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing praises unto the Lord." * Isa. xliii. 2: "They shall not overflow thee."

relation to my enemies ; for whether it be lifted up little or much, it is all one to me so long as it be above my enemies: their pitch is my proportion; for the mark of my aim is not superiority, but security; not to shine in other men's eyes, but not to have mine own put out.

There may be many causes of joy to a man in trouble, but none so great as this, to have his head lifted up above his enemies ; for though to take revenge of an enemy be the delight only of a cruel nature, yet to be able to take revenge is a joy to the mildest nature, but yet a joy that must be made a sacrifice ; not to grow insolent and proud upon it, but as to receive the power with humility, so to use it with mildness, and, most of all, to ascribe the glory to whom it belongs.

There was a time, O God, when thou didst lift up mine enemies' heads above me, and even then I offered thee a sacrifice too, but it was a sorrowful sacrifice—a sacrifice of sorrow ; but when thou shalt lift up my head above mine enemies, I will then offer thee a joyful sacrifice, a sacrifice of joy ; and it shall not be a silent joy, as though I sought to smother it, by which no glory would come unto thee, but it shall be a singing joy, and the song shall be of thy praises, as showing me to joy more in thy lifting me up than in my being lift up ; more for thy glory than for my own advancement ; but sing I shall for both : I shall sing to express my joy, and I shall sing to extol thy praises.

But why is David so suddenly turned from singing to crying, that he should fall so presently to say, *Hear me, O LORD, when I cry with my voice*¹ [ver. 7]? Is it that he finds God not well pleased with his singing, and therefore means to try what he can do with crying? Or is it that he thinks himself better at expressing sorrow than joy, and therefore hopes his crying may be heard, though his singing be not? Or is it, indeed, that singing and crying both are little enough to make a sacrifice to God? Alas! they are both of them too little to make an acceptable sacrifice, without God's mercy; and therefore David trusts not to them alone,

¹ Ps. xxvii, 7: "Hear, O LORD, *when* I cry with my voice; have mercy also upon me, and answer me."

but is glad to join God's mercy with them: Have mercy also upon me, O God, and answer me. It is a great mercy in God to hear us, but a greater mercy to answer us; and therefore to require his answer requires a more special invocation of his mercy, and the rather in hope to have a merciful answer; for, alas, if he should answer, and not in mercy, such an answer would be worse than silence.

But how can I doubt of God's answering me when I speak to him, who have myself answered him when he spake to me? For when thou saidst, *Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, I will seek* [ver. 8]. And for my heart to say it, is more than for my voice to cry it; for no crying of the voice makes so loud a sound in the ears of God as the saying of the heart, [so] that to use the terms properly, I might rather say, I cry it with my heart, and but say it with my voice.

But is this all the answer I shall have from God, that I should seek his face? Alas, O Lord, thy great favourite Moses could never obtain more than to see thy back parts,¹ and how then can I hope to see thy face? and if I cannot hope to see it, why wouldst thou have me spend time to seek it? But is it not all one, in the phrase of the law, to seek God's face, as in the phrase of the gospel to seek God's kingdom? and therefore as God saith here, *Seek ye my face*, so Christ saith there, *Seek God's kingdom*;² at least, if they be not both one, they are both sought one way, both sought by following God's commandments, for his commandments, if we follow them well, will both bring us to his kingdom, and to see his face.

Or is it not perhaps, in a plain literal sense, that to seek God's face is in our prayers and meditations to settle and fix the eyes of our minds wholly upon God, and, as it were, to look him in the face, wherein oh what infinite odds³ there is between the angels and us for magnifying of God; for they behold his face, and can see it visibly, where all that we can do towards it is only by the strength of imagination, which God knows is but weak, very weak in us,—weak in itself,

¹ Exod. xxxiii. 23.² Matt. vi. 23.³ Difference.

and weaker for want of intention; but if we could see his face as the angels do, O my soul, we should see in it, not only infinite causes for magnifying his name, but infinite sweetness for pleasing our own senses. For if the beauty of a carnal face be so admirable, so pleasing, as that no earthly thing may be compared to it, what ecstasy of admiration, what transcendency of pleasure must need be in the beauty of a spiritual face, and especially that face in which the fulness of all beauty resideth bodily! ¹ And have I not cause then to seek this face? O merciful God, grant me so to seek it that I may find it; ² for though this be not the place for finding it, yet this is the place for seeking it; and he that seeks it not here, he that seeks it not now, is never like to find it in another place, never like to find it hereafter.

But why am I so hasty to promise God to seek his face, as though it were in my own power to seek it at my pleasure? Alas! how can I choose but promise it, when God requires it? and how can I think, when he requires it, but that he will enable me—at least, not hinder me—to perform it? and yet I promise not performance, but will; and will I suppose I may safely promise, seeing will is present with me, ³ and can never be absent from me.

But when I seek thy face, vouchsafe, O God, *not to hide thy face from me* ⁴ [ver. 9]; for to what purpose should I seek it, if I cannot find it? and what hope of finding it, if thou be bent to hide it? Alas, O Lord, to bid me seek it, and then go presently and hide it from me, what were this but to mock me, as the Jews mocked Christ?—blindfold him, and strike him, and then bid him tell who struck him? ⁵ and, indeed, how should I seek it if I have not light to seek it by? and what light to seek it by but the light of thy countenance? ⁶ and what light of thy countenance if thou hide away thy face? To bid me to seek thy face, and then to hide thy face from me, were a kind of derision;

¹ Col. ii. 9: "All the fulness of the Godhead bodily." ² Matt. vii. 7. ³ Rom. vii. 18: "To will is present with me." ⁴ Ps. xxvii. 9: "Hide not thy face *far* from me; put not thy servant away in anger; thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation." ⁵ Matt. xxvi. 67, 68. ⁶ Ps. iv. 6.

and I hope, O God, thou wilt not use me so unkindly,—set me about a work scarce possible to be done, and then take from me all possible means of doing it. Alas, O Lord, all the encouragement I have to seek it is the hope I have thou wilt not hide it. Oh, therefore, hide not thy face from me, O God ; for if thou hide thy face from me, what can I think but that thou art angry? and if indeed thou be angry, yet use me at least as a servant : put me not away in thine anger ; for though I have committed many heinous faults against thee, yet may I not repent and amend them all, if thou but please not to be so hasty with me? What though my sins have made thee angry, wilt thou therefore presently turn me away? will no less punishment serve to appease thy displeasure but to turn me presently out of service? mayest thou not in so doing do that in anger which thou wilt have cause perhaps to be sorry for afterwards? wilt thou not leave thyself unprovided of servants to wait upon thee? For where are any such servants to be found, that some time or other will not give thee cause to be angry? If thou entertain stars to serve thee, is there not impurity in the stars?¹ If entertain angels to serve thee, didst thou not find folly in the angels?² Hast thou not promised to consider man, that he is but dust?³ and shall anger make thee to forget that promise? Hath not mercy the highest seat in thine ark?⁴ and shall anger be able to put her from her seat? Thou hast been my helper heretofore,⁵ and why didst thou help me but because I needed thy assistance? and may I not with thy assistance now return from my evil way, if thou be pleased not to be so hasty to turn me away? By thy helping me then, thou didst express thy loving me then ; and why then should I fear thou wilt now forsake me? for whom thou lovest, thou lovest to the end ;⁶ not to the end, and then [it] ends, but to the end that shall never end. Shall the heathen have cause, have colour of cause, to upbraid thee with inconstancy? that whom thou helpest at one time, thou forsakest at another? Or canst thou turn me away in anger, and then help me in mercy when thou

¹ Job xiv. 15. ² Job iv. 18.

³ Ps. ciii. 14.

⁴ Exod. xxvi. 34.

⁵ 1 Sam.

xvii. 12.

⁶ John xiii. 1.

hast done? Canst thou so soon change from mercy to anger, and from anger again to mercy, that we should never know in what temper to find thee? No, my soul, far be it from thee to have such thoughts; but the truth is, God's ways are not discerned, not discernible by us; they are past our finding out.¹ We know nothing at any time what it is he doeth; less why, and least of all how, he doeth it. Both the substance and the circumstance of all his actions is to us an *abyssus* [a great deep]; we know nothing of all his ways but this, that all his ways are mercy and truth;² nothing of his condition but this, that in him there is no change nor shadow of change.³

It is indeed the nature of all living creatures, though never so tender of their young ones, yet when they are grown to a ripeness of age and strength to turn them off to shift for themselves; and even a father and a mother, as tender as they are, have yet somewhat of this common nature in them⁴ [ver. 10]; for while their children are young, they lead them by the hand; but when they are grown up, they leave them to their own legs; and if they chance to fall, let them rise as they can; but God even then takes his children up, for he knows of what they are made; he knows their strength must as well be supported as their weakness be assisted; he knows they must as well be taken up when they fall as be held up when they stand; and therefore, though the tenderness of a father be great, of a mother perhaps greater, yet no comparison to be made with the tenderness of God. And seeing God is never without tenderness, why should I be ever without hope? and not hope as well to be delivered from trouble as others to be preserved in safety? O my soul, much rather; for seeing all things in this world are subject to change, is not that hope more like to succeed which hopes for a change than that which hopes for a continuance?

But seeing the way of thy tenderness is past our finding out, oh therefore do thou, O God, *teach me thy way, and*

¹ Rom. xi. 33. ² Ps. xxv. 10. ³ Jas. i. 17: "No variableness, neither shadow of turning." ⁴ Ps. xxvii. 10: "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up."

*lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies*¹ [ver. 11] Teach me thy way: how it can stand with tenderness to thy children, to suffer them to be afflicted, when thou sufferest the wicked to live in prosperity;² to make martyrs of thy servants, when the wicked flourish and live at ease;³ how it can stand with thy tenderness to take away thy servants in the midst of their days,⁴ oftentimes in the beginning, when thou sufferest the wicked of the world to run out the full races of long lives; why thou leadest the godly in paths of temptations, when thou leadest the wicked in paths of security. But if these ways of thine be too hard for me to learn, or if thy pleasure be not to reveal them as yet, at least, O God, lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies. If it were not for mine enemies, I would never make this suit unto thee, but would leave it to thee to lead me in what paths thou pleassest; but having the eyes of so many enemies upon me, if thou shouldst lead me now in a rugged path, where I might chance to stumble or fall, would not my enemies triumph at it, as at a victory? for they mark every step I take, to watch what advantage they can find against me; and if they should find me tripping never so little, I were sure to be made the anvil of their malice, to be beaten upon without either pity or compassion. But how great soever their malice be, I know they can do nothing without leave. Thou only, O God, hast an absolute power over me; my enemies none, but by thy permission; and I hope thou wilt retain thy power in thine own hands; at least, not make my enemies thy delegates. To thy will I willingly submit myself; but *deliver me not over to the will of my enemies*⁵ [ver. 12]; for thy will, when most severe, is yet with compassion; but their will, when most gentle, is always with cruelty. And I speak not this upon a bare suspicion, but I have evident proofs for what I say; *for false witnesses are risen up against me; and such as breathe out cruelty.* I desired indeed to be led in a plain path,

¹ Ps. xxvii. 11: "Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path because of mine enemies." ² Ps. lxxiii. 3. ³ Ps. xcii. 7; cf. cxxiii. 4. ⁴ Ps. cii. 24. ⁵ Ps. xxvii. 12: "Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty."

to the end I might walk upright both before God and men,¹ that so I might give my enemies no cause of offence, do nothing whereof I might be justly accused; but, alas, what good hath my integrity done me? for so great is my enemies' malice against me, that when they cannot charge me truly, they accuse me falsely; and because they would not be seen in it themselves, they suborn witnesses; and because one witness would not be sufficient, many; and lest their witnesses should be apt to relent, they have gotten such as breathe out cruelty; such as make cruelty their living, and trade, I may say, in no wares but cruel. Though I have a thousand witnesses of my innocency—my own conscience, yet these witnesses will not be heard in the courts of the world. Alas, no; I know one, an innocent indeed, who had greater witnesses than these, the witnesses of his pious and wonderful and wonderful pious works; yet neither would these be taken for witnesses of his innocency; but in the courts of the world he was condemned as guilty.

O my soul, *I had utterly fainted* under this burden if it had not been for one thing,—*if I had not believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living*² [ver. 13]. The only hope of this hath kept me from fainting; and how could it choose, being a cordial made up of three sovereign ingredients—a hope to see, and to see the goodness of God, and the goodness of God in the land of the living?—three such ingredients that he must be one of a very faint heart whom such a cordial will not keep from fainting.

But what ingredient of comfort is a hope to see? for do I not see now as well as I am like to do hereafter? Were not our first parents' eyes opened in Paradise? and can we hope to see better than they saw there? and do not our eyes stand as open as theirs still? O my soul, the opening of their eyes, then, hath made us see the worse ever since. We see now but as in a glass,³ rather appearances of things than things themselves; we see nothing now but colours, and colours are

¹ Ps. xxv. 21: "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me." ² Ps. xxvii. 13: "*I had fainted* unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living." ³ 1 Cor. xiii. 12: "Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now, I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

deceitful, and no trusting to them. The light I hope for is to see as I am seen ; a sight not subject to either dimness or dazzling ; a sight that discerneth not only colours but substances ; and is not the hope of such a sight a comfortable ingredient to keep from fainting ?

But yet what good is it to see goodness ? for we see many good things which yet we are never the better for seeing. But is it not true here, *videte et gustate* [see and taste] ? ¹ for such our seeing shall be, *videbimus et gustabimus*, our seeing shall be a tasting, our tasting an enjoying ; and enjoying is not properly of anything but in which there is joy ; and where there is joy, must there not needs be comfort ?

But yet what more goodness of God can we hope to see hereafter than now ? for can there be a greater goodness of God to be seen than this, that he makes the sun to shine, the rain to fall, upon both just and unjust ? ² We see indeed now a great goodness of God, but we see it mingled with much badness of men, and may I not say with some badness of his too ? for is there any evil in the city, and God hath not done it ? ³ But the goodness of God which I hope to see is a goodness like to garbled ⁴ spice, without any mixture at all of refuse stuff amongst it ; a goodness not mingled with either evil of men or evil to men, but pure and impermixed ⁵ as God himself is. The goodness of God which we see now is a goodness in effects, but there is a goodness in God which is as the cause ; not as having goodness, but as being goodness ; not only as imparting itself to us, but as communicating itself with us ; and this goodness we shall then see, though now we cannot. Have philosophers conceived that if virtue could be seen with the eyes, *mirabiles excitaret amores sui*, it would stir up in us a wonderful love [of herself] ; and will not the goodness of God, when seen with our eyes, stir up in our hearts a wonderful joy ? and is not the hope of such a joy a strong cordial to keep from fainting ?

But why in the land of the living ? for is not the world in which we now live the land of the living ? Are there not in the water living fishes ? in the air living birds ? on the earth

¹ Ps. xxxiv. 8. ² Matt. v. 45. ³ Amos iii. 6. ⁴ "Garble, to cleanse from dross and dirt ; commonly used of spices." (Bailey's Dict.) ⁵ Unmixed.

living trees, living beasts, living men? and what can be thought of more than these to make a land of the living? Alas! what land of the living is this in which there are more dead than living, more under ground than are above it, where the earth is fuller of graves than houses, where life lies trembling under the hand of death, and where death hath power to tyrannize over life? No, my soul, there only is the land of the living where there are none but the living; where there is a Church, not militant, but triumphant; a Church, indeed, but no churchyard, because none dead, nor none that can die; where life is not passive, nor death active; where life sits crowned, and where death is swallowed up in victory.¹ And now make up a compound of these ingredients. Take first a hope of seeing, which is enjoying; then the goodness of God, not a quality, but a substance; then the land of the living, where there is no dying; and now say if such a cordial must not needs be strong, of necessity be effectual, to keep from fainting? Oh therefore, my soul, be sure to provide thee good store of this cordial, that if at any time thou be oppressed with either multitude or malice, if at any time false witnesses be risen up against thee, if enemies at any time come upon thee to eat up thy flesh, thou mayest have this cordial in a readiness, and be able to say, Do the worst you can, I fear you not, for I believe to see the goodness of God in the land of the living. This not only will keep thee from fainting, but will fill thy spirits with ecstasy of joy, for it is grounded upon a principle of comfort delivered by St. Paul, The afflictions of this life are not worthy of the glory that shall be revealed.² And what is this glory but to see the goodness of God? and where to be revealed but in the land of the living?

But all this yet is but the hope of a cordial, at most but a cordial of hope; but when will the cordial itself that is hoped for be had? May I not stay so long waiting for it that I may be weary with waiting and faint with weariness, and then the cordial will come too late? No, my soul, *Wait on the LORD*;

¹ Isa. xxv. 8. ² Rom. viii. 18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

*be of good courage, and he shall give thee strength*¹ [ver. 14]; for as none is so worthy to be waited on as God, so nothing is so worthy to be waited for as this cordial; and never fear weariness by long waiting for it, so long as thou waitest upon God for it; for God that gives power to the cordial to keep thee from fainting, will give power to thy waiting to keep it from weariness. Only be sure to have a good heart, and God will not fail to supply it with spirits. Do thou but only bring wood to the sacrifice, and God will send fire from heaven to kindle it.²

But how happens it that David should give so good counsel to others, and yet follow it so ill himself? for he confesseth of himself in another place that he is dejected and bowed down;³ and can it stand with courage to be dejected? But is it not that to be dejected is a passive infirmity, to be courageous an active virtue? and there is no contradiction to be passively weak and actively strong, both at once. Or is it not, indeed, rather that when he confesseth himself to be dejected, he looks upon his sin? and sin will deject any that hath but eyes and is able to see it; but when he counsels to be courageous, he looks upon God; and God is ready to give strength to any that hath but a heart, and is able to take it. As, therefore, I said before, so I say again, Wait on the LORD, which can never be too much taught, because never enough be learned—never be too much said, because never be enough done.

¹ Ps. xxvii. 14: "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD." ² 1 Kings xviii. 33—38. ³ Ps. xxxviii. 6: "I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly."

I will extol thee, O LORD; for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me. 2. O LORD my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. 3. O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. 4. Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. 5. For his anger *endureth but* a moment; in his favour *is* life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy *cometh* in the morning. 6. And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. 7. LORD, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, *and* I was troubled. 8. I cried to thee, O LORD; and unto the LORD I made supplication. 9. What profit *is there* in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth? 10. Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me: LORD, be thou my helper. 11. Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; 12. To the end that *my* glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.—PSALM xxx.

MEDITATIONS AND DISQUISITIONS

UPON

THE THIRTIETH PSALM.

IT seems to be a course in nature for hosannas always to precede alleluias;¹ and therefore the exordiums of David's Psalms are commonly thus: Have mercy upon me, O God; hear my prayer, O Lord; rebuke me not in thine anger;² or some such form of hosanna; but in this Psalm, contrary to his custom, he makes his *exordium* [beginning] of an alleluia, *I will extol thee, O God*³ [ver. 1]. And why is this done? Is it out of devotion that he might get beforehand, and begin with God in praises, before God should begin with him in benefits? O my soul, the showers of God's blessings are so continually poured down upon us, that it is impossible we should ever get beforehand with God in alleluias. Although, therefore, he begin with an alleluia, yet it is because God hath prevented him in his hosanna. He will extol God, but it is because God hath lifted him up. God's praise, indeed, is put in the present tense, but it is because his benefit is in the preterperfect tense: *I will extol thee, O God; for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.*

But if David will extol God, how will he do it? for to do it unworthily, it were better to be left undone; and who is able to extol God worthily? He will therefore, perhaps,

¹ *Hosannas*, prayers for mercy; *Hallelujahs*, ascriptions of praise. ² Ps. vi. 1, li. 1, etc. ³ Ps. xxx. 1: "I will extol thee, O Lord, for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me."

call all the creatures of God to assist him, and say, Praise the Lord, all ye his angels ; praise him, all his hosts ; praise ye him, sun and moon ; praise him, all ye stars of light : let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.¹ But if it be expected he must extol him himself, and not look for help from others, he will then extol him in his exaltation, and say, Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens.² Or he will extol him in his own humility, by kneeling and falling down before him ; he will extol him in his singularity, and say, There is no other God in heaven or in earth, but only thou, O God ;³ or he will extol him in his plurality, and say, Thou, O God, art wonderful in thy being—three persons and one God, blessed for ever. And if to extol him with sayings will not serve, he will then extol him with works, that men, seeing his good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven.⁴ And if neither words nor works will be sufficient, he will then extol him with his silence and his wonder, leaving that for thought which cannot be expressed, and leaving that for astonishment which cannot be conceived.

But why is it that David will thus extol God? Is it that he may return a thankfulness answerable to the benefit ; return it in the same kind, and answer it, as it were, in its own language ? He will therefore extol God, which is a kind of lifting God up, because God hath lifted him up, which is a kind of extolling of him. For as our extolling of God is the highest work of our thankfulness, so God's lifting us up is the greatest benefit of his goodness. We are thankful to God, and ought to be, for his other benefits, even for casting us down ; but we use not to extol him but for lifting us up. For naturally, indeed, we are all of us desirous to be lifted up, to be set aloft, and to be high in the world ; for this pleaseth the eyes, that they may see the more ; and pleaseth the whole body, that it may the more be seen ; but this is not the lifting up that David means, but to be lifted up out of danger, and out of the reach of the arm of his enemies. O my soul, let this be thy comfort, that although thy enemies be many and great, yet they are not more thy enemies than

¹ Ps. cxlviii. 1—3 ; cl. 6. ² Ps. lvii. 5. ³ Deut. iv. 39 : "The LORD he is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath : *there is none else.*" ⁴ Matt. v. 16.

they are God's slaves, and can go no further than the length of their chain, which is seldom so long to reach to triumphing. Satan was a bitter enemy to Job, and had certainly defeated him utterly if God had not held him short in his chain;¹ and though link after link he eked out his chain to a great length, yet he could never make it reach so far as to a triumph; for it is not properly a triumph but when *dux duci arma detrahit*—when one general disarms another; and this could never be done to Job, for he kept on his armour still,—his helmet of faith, and his breastplate of righteousness;² he never let it go off from him, that there could be no cause for Satan to triumph. Men commonly are not satisfied unless themselves can triumph over their enemies; but it is enough for me, O Lord, that thou suffer not my enemies to triumph over me, for I aim not at glory, but at safety; I might then aim at glory if I were the assailant, but now that I am only the assailed, what can I more desire than safety, and to be out of the reach of all my enemies? and such safety, without any glory, may well give contentment, seeing of all the miseries that can befall a man in this wretched world, there is none greater, none so great, as to fall into the hands of enemies, whose malice, like the fire of hell, is commonly unquenchable. Let a friend strike me, and it shall be a balm to my head;³ but to be stricken by an enemy, who can endure it? The striking of a friend is out of love, and intends amendment; but the blows of an enemy are out of malice, and tend to ruin. It troubles me not that my enemies rejoice, so their rejoicing have no relation to me. It troubled not Samson so much to have his eyes put out, as to be brought out before his enemies to be the laughingstock for them to rejoice at.⁴

But why will David speak thus: Thou hast not made my enemies to rejoice over me; as though it were God that made our enemies to rejoice over us, and not their own spitefulness and malice? Is it that permission is in God a kind of action, and therefore he may justly be said to do that which he suffers to be done? or is it that in his anger

¹ Job i. 22; ii. 6. ² Eph. vi. 14—17. ³ Ps. cxli. 5. ⁴ Judg. xvi. 21—25.

he makes our enemies the executioners of his justice,¹ and punisheth our neglect of rejoicing in him with giving them power to rejoice over us? and so their rejoicing is not more in us his judgment, than it is in them his act and operation.

But what enemies do we talk of all this while? Worldly minds have no fear but of worldly enemies, and from such, perhaps, worldly friends may free them; but the spiritual man fears rather spiritual enemies; and who can free them from such, but only thou, O God, that art the God of spirits?² O merciful God, let not spiritual enemies have the victory over me, and I make no great reckoning of other enemies triumphing. Alas! I know that worldly enemies can never triumph over me if spiritual enemies get not first the victory.

And now, O my soul, if God have done this for me, have lifted me up above these enemies, above these enemies of both kinds, have I not a double cause to extol him for it, and to praise his name? And yet I may say I extol him not more for doing it, than for his readiness in doing it: *For I cried unto him, and he healed me*³ [ver. 2]; I no sooner cried, but he heard me; he no sooner heard me, but he healed me; my suit was no sooner made than granted; my disease as soon cured as discovered. He kept me not languishing, by drawing out his cure in length, but he applied a present remedy, and prevented⁴ hope with haste. As, therefore, I extolled him before for his love in lifting me up above my enemies, so I must extol him now for his compassion in being moved to do it for my only crying to him. I used no intercessor but my own voice, and he healed me; and for God to be moved with the cry of a wretched sinner, and so to be moved as presently to heal him, is it not a just cause to extol him, and say, O the wonderful bowels of compassion that are in God?

To be lifted up for any place is an act of power; but the lower the place is, it is the greater act of mercy; and can there be a lower place than the grave,—at least, than the grave of the soul? and for this low place was David lifted up, as ye may hear himself say: *Thou, O LORD, hast brought*

¹ Ps. xvii. 13. ² Numb. xvi. 22; xxvii. 16. ³ Ps. xxx. 2: "O LORD my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me." ⁴ Anticipated.

*up my soul from the grave ; thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down into the pit*¹ [ver. 3]. But is not this a strange speech in David, as though there were a grave of the soul, as there is of the body? for if there be not, how then is it true that God hath brought up his soul from the grave? Is it, perhaps, that he calls it the soul, which is but the cementing of the body and life together? or that he calls it the grave of the soul, when it is in the lowest estate of vivifying the body? Whatever it be, it shows a great mercy in God, and a great power of that mercy, to raise him up that was brought so low, and to keep him from falling into the pit, that was fallen already to the pit's brink. The truth is, that as sin is the death of the soul, so continuance in sin is the grave of the soul; and in this grave of continuance did David's soul lie a long time (alas! the shortest time in this case is long), till God, by his quickening Spirit, restored him again to the life of grace, that he had just cause to say, Thou, O Lord, hast brought up my soul from the grave, and hast kept me alive, that I should not go down into the pit. Oh, how many there are that have bodies walking above-ground, when their souls are lying in the grave? that are lusty and strong in the natural life, when in the spiritual life they are dead and buried? yet so long as they lie not buried above four days,² so long as they continue not in sin so long, till it have brought the soul into an absolute corruption, there is example in Lazarus; and where there is example there is hope they may be raised again to life, and be kept from falling into the pit of perdition. And now, O my soul, though God have not lifted thee up to as high a place, yet seeing he hath lifted thee up from as low a place as he did David, hast thou not as just cause as he to say, I will extol thee, O God, for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not suffered my enemies, sin and death, to triumph over me? And here I find myself so oppressed with joy, that I am not able to express it without assistance; and what assistance can I look for but from the saints of God? Oh, therefore,

¹ Ps. xxx. 3: "O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit." ² John xi. 39, 43, 44.

Sing unto the Lord, all ye saints of his ; give thanks unto him at the remembrance of his holiness [ver. 4]. It is not enough to praise him, if ye do not sing his praises ; for it must be done with cheerfulness and exultation ; and it is not enough to sing, if ye do not praise him ; for your joy must be in him and for him,—in his goodness, and for his glory.

If it were to sing of another thing, I should require the whole choir of God's creatures to join in the singing ; but now that it is to sing of God's holiness, what should profane voices do in the concert ? None but saints are fit to sing of holiness, and specially of God's holiness, but most specially with songs of holiness. Oh therefore sing to the Lord, all ye saints of his,¹ and let your songs be more of his praises than of your own thankfulness ; and let your own thankfulness not be so much for the benefits which you have received, as for the holiness with which they are bestowed ; for God gives not his benefits, as the world useth to do,² out of any corrupt affection, or with any corrupt intention, but there is a holiness in his giving as well as in his gifts ; and seeing the cherubim and seraphim do continually cry to God, Holy, holy, holy,³ you that are his saints may well afford to sing to God at the remembrance of his holiness.

But what holiness can there be in anger ? and is there not anger in God sometimes ? and will not this then be a cause rather of weeping to think of his anger, than of singing at the remembrance of his holiness ? O my soul, this need be no cause to break off the singing, *For his anger endureth but a moment*⁴ [ver. 5] ; and even anger itself is in God a holiness ; it is none of the things that are natural and permanent in God ; it is but forced upon him by the violence of sin ; and as forced as it is, it stays not with him ; it is but as a wind that passeth ; *dum oritur moritur*,—it dies in the birth. Nothing lives, and is permanent in God, but only his favour and his love ; and therefore, *Though weeping may endure for a night, yet joy cometh in the morning*. And

¹ Ps. xxx. 4 : "Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness." ² John xiv. 27. ³ Te Deum ; cf. Isa. vi. 3 ; Rev. iv. 8. ⁴ Ps. xxx. 5 : "For his anger endureth but a moment ; in his favour is life : weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

seeing our life is of this condition, that heaviness sometimes must as well be had as joy, it is happy for us they are so disposed that heaviness comes but in the evening, when we may sleep it out, and when our senses are apt to be tied up from feeling it; but joy cometh in the morning, when all our senses are waking to entertain it. What is the evening but the end of the day? and what is the evening of our life but the end of our days? and in this evening indeed there is commonly heaviness,—weeping for parting of friends that have lived together; but this heaviness is removed as soon as morning comes; for what is the morning but when the sun riseth again? and what is our morning but when we shall rise again? and as when this morning comes there will be a day that shall have no more evening,¹ so when this joy comes all tears shall be wiped from our eyes,² and there shall be no more weeping.³ Indeed, all our great joys have ever come in the morning: it was a joy that came in the morning at the birth of Christ; it was a joy that came in the morning at the resurrection of Christ;⁴ it was a joy that came in the morning at the descending of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles;⁵ and these joys were then so great that they have made us feasts ever since (our Christmas, our Easter, and our Whitsuntide); yet these joys had their heaviness preceding: the joy of Christ's birth had the heaviness of his mother's flight;⁶ the joy of Christ's resurrection had the heaviness for his passion; the joy of the descending of the Holy Ghost, the heaviness for Christ's departing; but these heavinesses were so presently followed with joys that it hath made this aphorism⁷ be found true still, Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. And now, O my soul, what need it trouble thee to have heaviness in the evening, so long as thou art sure to have joy in the morning? what need it trouble thee to be weeping for a time, when thou art sure of rejoicing when time shall be no more?

Hitherto I have been busy about singing God's praises for lifting me up, which hath been his work; now I must

¹ Rev. xxi. 25, xxii. 5. ² Rev. vii. 17. ³ Rev. xxi. 4. ⁴ Luke xxiv. 1.
⁵ Acts ii. 1—4, 15. ⁶ Query *slight*. ⁷ Aphorism, a general maxim or rule.

leave singing, and come to saying, to speak of my own work: *And I said in my prosperity, I shall never be moved*¹ [ver. 6], but, alas, if my singing were no better than my saying, it had been better for me to have held my peace in both, for what a saying is this to say, I shall never be moved? Is there any mountain so strong² [ver. 7] that it cannot be moved? and if no mountain, how any man? but this is the insolent language of prosperity, to give over crying to God, and fall a-boasting of itself. Alas! prosperity hath neither good tongue nor good eyes: as it made David say he should never be moved, so it made him think it enough that God by his favour had *made his mountain strong*; but as for the maintaining it strong, to arrogate that to himself, when God knows, if once we leave depending upon God, and arrogate anything to ourselves, our mountain will soon be turned into a valley,³ and our strength will go from us, as it did from Samson when his hair was cut off;⁴ and this makes David say now, *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled*; for as it is the favour of God that makes our mountain strong, and our mountain being strong we are kept from trouble, so it is the hiding of God's face that makes our mountain weak; and our mountain being weak we are presently troubled; but rather, indeed, if God do not as well maintain our mountain strong as make it strong, we shall quickly bring our mountain to a molehill, we shall quickly either fall ourselves from our mountain, or have our mountain to fall upon us.

We see the earth hath no comfort but in the sun; and therefore if the sun be removed, the earth presently puts on blacks, is pinched with cold, and covered with darkness. That which the sun is to the earth, thy face, O God, is to me; and what marvel then, when thou hidest thy face, if I be left as a disconsolate earth in trouble and mourning? God useth not to hide his face from any that depend upon him, and therefore as long as I put my trust and confidence

¹ Ps. xxx. 6: "And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved." ² Ps. xxx. 7: "LORD, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled." ³ Isa. xl. 4: "Every mountain and hill shall be made low." ⁴ Judg. xvi. 19.

in him, he was to me as a strong mountain ; I enjoyed his favour and the light of his countenance ; but as soon as I left depending upon him, and trusted to my own strength, my mountain was suddenly turned into a valley, and I was left, alas, in a vale of misery. Oh therefore, my soul, notwithstanding any prosperity whatsoever, do thou depend upon God for thy mountain, both for making it strong and for maintaining it strong, and never be moved to say thou shalt never be moved ; for to be immovable is a privilege of God himself, and of God alone, and is not communicable to any creature. It is a false saying in any estate to say, I shall never be moved ; but in prosperity, falsest of all ; for he that is in prosperity stands in a slippery place,¹ and such a place is not capable of stability. What is prosperity but an earthly thing ? and can anything that is earthly be secure from moving when the body of the earth itself is moved ? O my soul, the consideration of this, alas ! the feeling of this, hath made me leave both singing and saying, and fall to my crying again : *I cried to thee, O LORD ; and unto the LORD I made supplication* [ver. 8]. Indeed, crying is the voice of a suppliant, and the fittest voice for a supplication ; but yet why should David tell God of his crying to him, and say, I cried to thee, O Lord, as though God knew it not, without his telling it ? No doubt, God knew of his crying, for how else did he hear it ? and of his supplication, for how else could he grant it ? and therefore it seems he tells it not so much to God as to us, that we may take notice with what sacrifices God is pleased ; for as there are divers sacrifices that are acceptable to God, so each of them, in the due time, is the fittest and most acceptable : singing fittest after a benefit obtained, and crying fittest for obtaining a benefit ; alleluias fittest when we are in triumph, hosannas fittest when we are in distress. And therefore, being at the present in peril of his life, and delivered as it were into the hands of death, the sacrifice he offers now is a supplication, which yet seems not so much a supplication as an expostulation : *What profit is there in my blood, when I go down into the pit ?*

¹ Ps. lxxiii. 3, 18.

Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth? [ver. 9.] If I go down into the pit, shall I not be turned into dust? and is dust good for anything but to be food for the serpent?¹ May I not do thee better service above ground than under it? Alas, I shall be there but in the company of worms²—poor silly things that are not capable of knowing thee. I am here in the society of reasonable creatures, with whom I may join in extolling thy praises. Hast thou not breathed into me the breath of life,³ and wilt thou draw in thy breath so quickly again, and leave me but dust, as thou foundest me at first? Though the service I can do thee be not great, yet it is more than dust can do. Hath dust a tongue, or a voice, or any instruments of life for the declaring of thy truth? and why then wilt thou make a divorce of parts which thou hast joined together of purpose for that purpose? If I desired life for any end of my own, thou hadst just cause then to make an end of my life; but now that I desire it to do thee service, why wilt thou diminish the number of thy servants, and not leave enough for the service thou hast to do? Can any number be sufficient to praise thee? Can there ever be mouths enough to declare thy truth? and may not I make one—a sinful one I know, but yet one in the number, if thou but please to spare me for descending into the pit? But what pit? I mean not the pit where the apostate angels are: I know they descended not, but fell; and I know the pit they fell into is a pit of blasphemy: the pit I fear descending into is but a pit of silence, and yet in one thing is worse than theirs; for they in their pit retain their substance still, but I in this shall lose my very being; at least, the *quantitas continua* [coherent mass] of my body shall be turned into the *quantitas discreta* [scattered mass] of dust; and the frame compacted of all the elements dissolved, I shall remain nothing but as it were a few crumbs of earth, and what can earth do when it is not assisted with fire and water? Oh therefore *Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me: LORD, be thou my helper [ver. 10];* for if thou lend me not thine ear, how can I hope

¹ Gen. iii. 14; Isa. lrv. 25.² Isa. xiv. 11.³ Gen. ii. 7.

thou wilt show me mercy? and if thou have not mercy upon me, how can I hope thou wilt be my helper? Hear me, O God, while I am in a place where I may be heard, for if once I be descended into the pit, I shall quite then be out of all hearing. Have mercy upon me while I am capable of mercy; for if once I be turned into dust, what mercy can I look for? Be thou my helper, O God, now that I am in a state to be helped; for if my blood in which my life consists be once shed, what good then will thy help do me? I place God's mercy in the midst here because it must serve to both the other—both to make God to hear me, and to make him to help me; and God's mercy can do both; it can make him to hear me though I were silent, and can make him to help me though I were dust. But though God's mercy can do it, am I sure it will do it? O my soul, his mercy hath done it already; for it is the work of his mercy that he hath *turned my mourning into dancing*, that he hath *put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness*¹ [ver. 11]. O wonderful conversion! the very same miracle, I may say, that Christ wrought at the marriage in Cana; for to turn mourning into dancing, what is it but to turn water into wine?² To have turned my mourning but into comfort had been a great work and a great favour; but to turn my mourning into dancing, the extremity of sorrow into extremity of joy, who could do this but thou only, O God, with whom, as no miracles are wonders, so no extremities are limits? Mourning is not properly but for one that is dead; and, indeed, so near being dead was I that I might well be said to mourn for my own death: not unlike the swan, if it be true that she sings her own elegy; and now to have my mourning turned into dancing, the drooping act for death be turned into the most lively act of life, what is it but the miracle, as it were, of resurrection and ascension both at once? at least from the lowest stair³ of misery to be raised to the highest of happiness; and not *gradatim*, by degrees and steps, but *per saltum* [by a bound], by a motion more swift than the fiery chariot that carried up Elijah into

¹ Ps. xxx. 11: "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness." ² John ii. 8, 9. ³ Degree.

heaven;¹ and so the change not more wonderful than the suddenness,—mourning turned into dancing, a wonderful change; and done, as it were, in the turning of a hand, as wonderful a suddenness.

And now, to make me fit for dancing, thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; for indeed, if I had kept on my sackcloth still, I should have made but a heavy dancer; but now that my sackcloth is off, and I am girded with gladness, I shall leap as light as Abraham did to see thy day.²

I put on sackcloth when I was a mourner, but now that I am to be a dancer, I am girded with gladness; and if I mourned before to think of God's anger, may I not justly dance now, to think of his favour? If I put on sackcloth before, as sorrowing for my sin, may I not justly now be girded with gladness, as rejoicing in my Saviour? For though it be God's mercy that hath done this for me, yet it is his mercy in Christ my Saviour, without whom his mercy alone would never have done it. He would never have put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness, but for his sake, and through his means, that was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows.³ My sackcloth was but a loose garment about me, which might easily be put off at pleasure; but my gladness is girt about me to be fast and sure, and cannot leave me though it would; at least, none shall be able to take it from me.

And now, though this be spoken here in the case of David, yet it may be conceived as in type for all the godly: if they mourn and lie in sackcloth now, yet they shall ere long be girded with gladness, and dance for joy. But what dancing? Not like that of Herodias' daughter, for which Herod allowed her to ask half his kingdom;⁴ but like that of David before the ark,⁵ for which God, without asking, will give us a whole kingdom. And when shall the time be? Alas! it cannot be long, for they shall not go out of Egypt into Canaan, as the old Israelites did, by the tedious

¹ 2 Kings ii. 11. ² John viii. 56: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day." Vulg., "*exultavit*," leaped for joy. ³ Ps. xlv. 7; Heb. i. 9. ⁴ Mark vi. 22, 23. ⁵ 2 Sam. vi. 4.

passages of a troublesome wilderness,¹ but their mourning shall be turned into dancing, a conversion as sudden as when Moses' leprous hand was turned to be sound again, by putting it only in his bosom.²

But to what end is it that God hath done this for me? It may be thought, because he hath turned my mourning into dancing, and hath girded me with gladness, that he hath done it to this end, that I might live in jollity, and spend my time with Belshazzar³ in revelling and feasting; but there is no such matter; he hath done it *to this end, that my glory may sing praise unto him, and not be silent*⁴ [ver. 12]; to this end, that not only I may praise him, but may sing his praises, and not only that I, but that my glory may sing them; and, alas, what glory have I? doth not all glory belong to God? Indeed so it is; my glory then sings his praises when I ascribe to him all praise and glory; my glory then sings his praises when I praise him with all I have to glory in, with all the faculties and powers of my soul and body, those especially in which I was made after his image, for this is my glory.

If this, then, be the end that God intends, shall I be so ungrateful to cross his intentions? if he have given me a tongue and a voice to serve him, shall I hold my peace, and be silent in his service? if he have turned my mourning into dancing, shall I be sullen, and slow to sing his praises? Alas! my dancing can never be kindly⁵ without music; and what music so fit for it, as singing? and what singing so fit as to the ditty of his prayers? O my soul, seeing God hath procured thee liberty to dance, thou mayest well afford to find the music; and yet neither my dancing shall hearken to the music, nor my singing shall look toward the dancing, but my singing and my dancing both shall be addressed and directed to God alone. Shall my heart be so set upon my joy as to make me forget the author of my joy? No, O God; my joy hath so sure a foundation,⁶ that I can never be unmindful of the founder: I will give thanks

¹ Exod. xiii. 18. ² Exod. iv. 7. ³ Dan. v. 1-4. ⁴ Ps. xxx. 12: "To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever" ⁵ Natural. ⁶ Isa. xxviii. 16.

to thee, O Lord my God, for ever. Not for a time which will cease ; not as long as the sun and moon endure,¹ which shall not always endure ; not as long as I have breath in my body ; no, my soul, but as long as thou thyself hast being,² which being breathed into me by God, shall never cease ; shall always endure ; shall be for ever.

When I extolled God, I had relation to his omnipotence ; when I sung his praises, to his mercy ; and now that I give him thanks for ever, to his eternity ; that now I may conclude, and say, O almighty, most merciful, and ever-living God, to thee be ascribed all honour, praise, and glory, world without end.

¹ Ps. lxxii. 5.² Ps. civ. 33 ; cxlvi. 2.



I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth. 2. My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear *thereof*, and be glad. 3. O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together. 4. I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. 5. They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed. 6. This poor man cried, and the LORD heard *him*, and saved him out of all his troubles. 7. The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. 8. O taste and see that the LORD *is* good: blessed *is* the man *that* trusteth in him. 9. O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for *there is* no want to them that fear him. 10. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good *thing*. 11. Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD. 12. What man *is he that* desireth life, and loveth *many* days, that he may see good? 13. Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. 14. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. 15. The eyes of the LORD *are* upon the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their cry. 16. The face of the LORD *is* against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. 17. *The righteous* cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. 18. The LORD *is* nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. 19. *Many are* the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all. 20. He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken. 21. Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate. 22. The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.—
PSALM xxxiv. (Auth. Ver.)

MEDITATIONS

UPON THE

THIRTY-FOURTH PSALM OF DAVID.

ALAS! what a vow is this that David makes here¹ [ver. 1], a vow which he is sure beforehand he cannot keep; for is it possible for any man to *bless God at all times*? Is there not a time of pain and misery, in which Job's wife persuaded him to curse God and die?² And can cursing of God stand with blessing of God? O my soul, I take not my measure of blessing God from the last of that wicked woman. It is not pain, it is not misery, it is not extremity of pain or misery, that shall make me to break my vow in blessing of God; but if it be thought so great a matter to bless God in misery, I will stretch my vow yet further, for I will bless him for misery; and I may truly say, if it were not for pain and misery, I should want one special motive for blessing of God.

But yet there is a time of sleep which is a tribute due to nature; and is it possible to pay the tribute of sleep to nature, and the tribute of blessing to God, both at once? If then sleep be of necessity so oftentimes, how can blessing of God be performed at all times? O my soul, when our waking is terminated with blessing of God, that blessing is in force till we wake again; for as in what place the tree falleth, there it lieth;³ so in what state the soul goes to rest, in that state it resteth. If my soul say to God, I will

¹ Ps. xxxiv. 1: "I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise *shall* continually be in my mouth." ² Job ii. 9. ³ Eccles. xi. 3.

lay me down to sleep, for it is thou, Lord, only that sustainest me,¹ my soul shall have it returned from God. Thus the Lord giveth his beloved sleep.²

But if thus, perhaps, be made good the continuance of blessing God, yet in what consists the work of blessing him? Is it only in thought, or only in a good intention? No, my soul; his praise shall continually be in my mouth; for though the heart indeed be the fountain of blessing him, yet out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh;³ and therefore it shall not be cloistered up in the cells of silence, but it shall have vent, and be brought into the light, that if it be not said that men seeing my good works, it may at least be said that men hearing my good words, may glorify our Father which is in heaven.⁴ But do I not by this fall again upon my old difficulty? for if it seemed impossible before to bless God at all times, may it not justly seem as impossible now, that his praise should *continually be in my mouth*? It may perhaps be true of the angels, in whose mouths we know of nothing there is continually; but Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth;⁵ but to be verified of the mouths of men seems a thing impossible, for is there not a necessity of speaking many things besides God's praises? Yet nothing must be spoken but either his praise or to his praise, or else we break our vow. And how, then, is this riddle to be expounded? Is it not as St. Paul expounds it: Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do else, let all be done to the praise and glory of God.⁶ And if all we do may be done to the praise of God, then certainly all we speak may be spoken to the praise of God; and indeed, seeing he never ceaseth to send forth continually his blessings, with what reason can we cease to set forth continually his praises?

But when I make this vow to bless God at all times, I make it not presuming upon any ability in myself: alas, I know my own weakness, and how unready I am to any

¹ Ps. iii. 5: "I laid me down and slept; I awaked, for the LORD sustained me."
² Ps. cxvii. 2. ³ Matt. xii. 34. ⁴ Matt. v. 16. ⁵ Te Deum; cf. Rev. iv. 8.
⁶ 1 Cor. x. 31: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

goodness ; *but my soul maketh her boast in the Lord*¹ [ver. 2]. My confidence is that he who hath given me the resolution to will it, will give me also the power to perform it ; that he who hath begun the work will also finish it ;² and being so good an architect as he is, will not lay a foundation, but will as well also set on the roof. If I should boast in myself, I should do wrong to God ; but if I boast not in God, I do wrong to myself : seeing God is a strength to none but to them that make him their strength ; and none make him their strength but they that make their boast of him. It is a hard matter to bring boasting and humility to meet together in one subject, between which there is so natural an antipathy : yet here it is done,—for this I may say is the humble boasting, where a vain man may glory without vain-glory, where a weak agent may presume without presumption ; not like the boasting of the Pharisee, so hateful in the eyes of God, so offensive in the ears of the humble :³ for the *humble can hear* this boasting, *and be glad*, which they would never do if it were not conformable to the rules of humility. Can any boasting be greater than to say, I can do all things ? yet in this boasting there is humility, when I add, In him that comforteth me ;⁴ for though God like not of boasting, yet he likes of this boasting, which arrogates nothing to ourselves, but ascribes all to him : and seeing my soul boasteth herself of God, I doubt not but as the humble hear it, and be glad, so God sees it, and is pleased, and accepts my boasting as a sacrifice of humility.

But to what end is it that my boasting tends ? Is it to set forth my own worthiness, and to vaunt of my abilities ? Is it to tread in the steps of Lucifer,⁵ or to walk in the way of the Pharisee ?⁶ God forbid ; the humble then would not be glad to hear my boasting. No, my soul, it is to magnify the Lord : oh, therefore, *magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together* [ver. 3] ; for, alas, what am I to magnify his name myself alone, if I have not

¹ Ps. xxxiv. 2 : "My soul shall make her boast in the LORD : the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad." ² Phil. i. 6. ³ Luke xviii. 11. ⁴ Phil. iv. 13. ⁵ Isa. xiv. 12. ⁶ Luke xviii. 11.

company to help me? All I can do, and all the humble can do, is but to say, Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but to thy name give the glory,¹ which is rather a vilifying of ourselves than a magnifying of him. They must be creatures of a better metal that can serve, and yet cannot serve, to magnify him as they should: and it is not the work of a few; all the millions of millions, in heaven and earth, have enough to do, and more than enough, to exalt his name. Oh therefore, ye blessed spirits of heaven, do you magnify the Lord;² but take me with you in your company, that though I add nothing to the weight of the work, yet I may add one to the number of the workmen in magnifying his name. We that are dwellers on the earth³ can exalt his name no higher than the heavens; and there you that be inhabitants of heaven must take it, and exalt it higher; and so between us all we shall make a shift to exalt him to his true elevation, for his glory is above the heavens.⁴ But if, perhaps, you think scorn of our company, as being men of polluted lips,⁵ and therefore not worthy to be of your concert, yet the humble will make a concert by themselves, and will not, indeed cannot be, kept from exalting his name, for our humility is his exaltation; and then we raise him up to the height of his throne when we cast ourselves down as low as his footstool; that it is but a diverse expressing of the same thing, in substance, whether we say, Let us exalt the name of the Lord; or, Let us fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker.⁶

David is not wont to use exclamations but upon special occasion. If he use one here, and say, O magnify the Lord, we may know that to magnify his name is a thing of great importance; indeed, so great, that all things besides it—at least, all things without it—are nothing but vanity.⁷ Oh, then, all you that be exalted in heaven, and all you that be humble in the earth,—and lest any be left out where all are too few, oh all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord; praise him, and magnify him for ever: for *I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears*

¹ Ps. cxv. 1. ² Ps. cxlviii. 2. ³ Ps. cxlviii. 7, 11—13. ⁴ Ps. cxiii. 4.
⁵ Isa. vi. 5. ⁶ Ps. xcv. 6. ⁷ Eccles. i. 2.

[ver. 4]. To seek, and upon seeking to be heard, is a great favour; but to be heard, and upon hearing to be delivered from all fears, is a favour that deserves magnifying in the highest degree.

But why is it that I sought him? Is it not because I had lost him before? And why should I seek to get him again, and would not keep him when I had him? O my soul, *Carendo magis quam fruendo*—We know the goodness of things more by wanting them than by enjoying them; though I could not see what happiness it was to have him, yet I see what misery it is to want him; and yet in this I account myself happy that I have sought him while he was within hearing; for, alas, if I had stayed from seeking him till he had been out of hearing, what hope could I have had of ever recovering him?

But oh the tender mercies of God, that hath not suffered me to put off my seeking him so long; for, O my soul, it is no less his mercy that I seek him than that he hears me; my desire is not more to have him than his to be had, for how else could he have heard me as soon as I sought him, but that he stood listening, as it were, when I would seek him? And he heard me not as one that were indifferent whether he heard me or no, but he gave me audience with no less intention to grant my suit than attention to know it; for hear the success of my seeking him, see the fruit of his hearing me: he delivered me from all my fears. To have delivered me from all my troubles had been a great favour, but a far greater to deliver me from all my fears; for where that would have freed me from present evil, this secures me from evil to come; that now I enjoy not only tranquillity, but security, a privilege only of the godly. The wicked may be free from trouble, but can they be free from fear? No; God knows, though they be not in trouble like other men,¹ yet they live in more fear than other men. Guiltiness of mind, or mind of the world, never suffers them to be secure: though they be free sometimes from the fit of an ague, yet they are never without a grudging; and (if I

¹ Ps. lxxiii. 5.

may use the expression of poets) though they feel not always the whip of Tisiphone,¹ yet they feel always her terrors; and seeing the Lord hath done this for me, hath delivered me from all my fears, have I not cause, just cause to magnify him and exalt his name?

But is God's mercy confined only to me, and not extended as well to others? Yes, my soul, *Deus omnibus idem* [God is the same to all]; God is good to all, his mercy is over all his works;² not only over them as being above them all, but over them as extended to them all, for other as well as I *looked unto him, and were lightened*³ [ver. 5]. But should it not be rather said, God looked to them, and they were lightened, than to say, They looked to God, and were lightened? For God is light,⁴ and when the light looks to us we are sure to be lightened; but we that are [in] darkness may look to the light, and yet continue in darkness still; but is it not that the influence of God's favour descends upon the godly in a kind of correspondence to their service: if they cry, they shall be heard;⁵ if they mourn, they shall be comforted;⁶ if they humble themselves, they shall be exalted;⁷ so here, because they looked to God, they were lightened. Indeed light is the proper inheritance of the godly,⁸ as being the children of light,⁹ which though they cannot deserve, yet they may expect; and have they not reason then to look to him in whom it is, and from whom it must come? They little deserve to be lightened that will not look to him that is their light: if it may be had for a look, and they will not do that, they worthily deserve to be kept in darkness. It is true all would be lightened, but all take not the right course; they look not the right way. There are some that look to the stars to be lightened,¹⁰ because the stars indeed are glorious bodies, and give light to the world; and these are such as attribute all to chance and fortune; and there are some, and these the worst some, that look to Lucifer to be lightened,¹¹ because they think he bears not his name for

¹ One of the Furies, avengers of crime. ² Ps. cxlv. 9. ³ Ps. xxxiv. 5: "They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed." ⁴ 1 John i. 5. ⁵ Ps. cxlv. 18. ⁶ Matt. v. 4. ⁷ Matt. xxiii. 12. ⁸ Ps. xcvi. 11. ⁹ Eph. v. 8; 1 Thess. v. 5. ¹⁰ Astrologers. ¹¹ They that consult familiar spirits.

nought, and these are such as light them candles of impiety, and by impiety; but these are delusions and impostures; the way to be truly lightened indeed is to look to God, for he is the Father of lights,¹ and as there is nothing with him, so there comes nothing from him, but only light. O then, my soul, look to God, and he will lighten thee; look to him with the eye of faith, and the light of his countenance shall shine upon thee.

But though the children of the world be wiser in their generation than the children of light,² yet in this the godly are the wiser, for they looked to God and were lightened, and *their faces were not ashamed*. But may we not say then, the more shame for them? for is it not true which is said, that nothing belongs to us but confusion and shame of face?³ may we not be ashamed to show our faces to God, being so foul and filthy as they are, seeing he endures nothing that is unclean? O my soul, as they that looked to the brazen serpent were presently healed,⁴ so they that look to God are presently lightened, for though looking to the material sun be a cause to stain and tan the face, yet looking to the Sun of Righteousness⁵ is a means to cleanse it and make it amiable; and why then should they be ashamed? Is it any shame to show our sores to our physician, or any shame to show our faults to our confessor? No more is it any shame to show our faces to God, though never so foul and so full of stains, seeing he is the true Physician that only can cure us; he the true Confessor that only can absolve us.

But who were they that are lightened? Perhaps *Pauci quos æquus amavit* [Some few whom the just (Jupiter) has loved], some few that were in his favour; perhaps rich men that could offer him hecatombs, and plentiful sacrifices. No, my soul, *The poor man cried, and he heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles*⁶ [ver. 6]; for God is no acceptor of persons; he neither regards the legs of the strong, nor the faces of the beautiful, nor the wealth of the rich; but who-

¹ Jas. i. 17. ² Luke xvi. 8. ³ Dan. ix. 7, 8. ⁴ Numb. xxi. 9. ⁵ Mal. iv. 2. ⁶ Ps. xxxiv. 6: "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles."

soever they be that look to him and fear him, they are sure to taste of his mercy and goodness.

But though the poor man cried, are we sure he cried to God? He might cry out of sense of his misery, and what were this to move God to hear? O my soul, any crying of the godly is a music with which God is pleased, or at least is moved. If it be a crying out of sense of misery, God is moved with it in his mercy; if a crying out of devotion, God is pleased with it in his justice. O then, my soul, rather never cry than not cry to God, for by crying to him thou gettest, I may say, two strings to thy bow, both his mercy and his justice; and were it not folly to leave out one where thou mayest have both? But though we know not what the poor man's crying was, yet we see what God's hearing was, for, hearing him, he saved him from all his troubles; and who would not cry, to be so heard? The world may think it a strange course in the poor man to cry to God to deliver him from his troubles, being so far off from him; but how far was he from him when he heard him? If he were so near to him that he might hear him, he could not be so far from him but he might help him. O my soul, let the world think their pleasure, let them study, and plot, and cast about how to bring their purposes to pass; do thou cry to God to deliver thee from thy troubles; for if thou cry, thou mayest be sure he will hear thee; and if he hear, thou needest not doubt but he will help thee. But yet mistake not the meaning when it is said that God saved him from all his troubles; as though, because he was a poor man, that therefore he was presently made rich; or if he were in pain, that he had presently ease; for God goes not always the ordinary way of physicians, to cure cold diseases with hot medicines: his ways of deliverance are oftentimes spiritual; and so Job might be said to be delivered from all his troubles when God gave him patience to endure his troubles; but specially Lazarus might be said to be delivered from his troubles when he was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom.¹

¹ Luke xvi. 22.

And here it falls out fitly to mention angels : for *the angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them* [ver. 7]. We little think we have a continual guard about us, and less we think that we have a whole camp for our guard, but least of all that it is a camp of angels. Oh how safe should we think ourselves if this were so ! O my soul, this is so, and yet we think ourselves not safe enough ; and may it not then be justly said, What doubt ye of, O ye of little faith ?¹ But how can we think there be angels to guard us when we scarce think there be any angels ? for if there be, they must be creatures of God, and then certainly creatures of a most excellent nature ; and would Moses then have left them out in his catalogue of creatures where he reckons them all up ?² Indeed for this very reason, because they are creatures of a most excellent nature, hath Moses left them out ; for he speaks but of material creatures in this material world, of which number the angels are none. But we may think, perhaps, there are none because we can see none, as though we can see a thing that is invisible : shall we therefore think we have no souls because we cannot see our souls ? We live now by faith,³ and not by sight, and therefore can neither see souls nor angels ; we shall then see both, when we shall live by sight, and not by faith. Alas ! if we believe no more than we see, we seem not to live by faith neither, for faith believes that which it cannot see. Oh, therefore, my soul, to make it appear thou livest, and that thou livest by faith, let this be an article of thy creed, that the angels encamp and pitch their tents about thee ; that if at any time thou be assaulted, if assaulted by enemies, if by an army of enemies, thou mayest have recourse to the confidence of this guard, and never tremble for any alarm, seeing there are more with us than are against us.

But how can the godly think they have a guard about them, when it is for princes only to have a guard, and the godly for the most part are but private men ? O my soul, this is a guard that attends no less the poorest man than the greatest prince, and attends him with as much carefulness as if he were a prince.

¹ Matt. viii. 26 ; xiv. 31.² Gen. i, ii. ; cf. Exod. xx. 11.³ Rom. i. 17.

But if there be angels to attend the godly, why do they not defend them? why do they suffer them to be so molested, so afflicted as they are? for who are in such troubles, who groan under such afflictions as the godly? And would this be so if that were so? Would they be so oppressed if they had angels to relieve them? O my soul, thou little considerest the infinite benefits that the godly receive by the ministry of angels. If perhaps they suffer troubles of the body, do they not escape far greater of the soul? If they endure perhaps some momentary afflictions, do they not avoid afflictions that would be everlasting? Is there not an army of malignant spirits to assault them, and could they be safe from tearing in pieces if there were not a camp of angels to assist them? But though the angels be a guard to the whole man, both body and soul, yet being creatures spiritual and invisible, they are chiefly a guard to the invisible and spiritual part, which is the soul. The body they know must go to the earth, and therefore, though a part, is the least part of their care: it is the soul they chiefly wait upon, because it is the soul they chiefly wait for; for they stand waiting for the soul when it shall leave the body, that they may take it and carry it into Abraham's bosom;¹ for till then they break not up their camp.

And now, O my soul, seeing the angels are so beneficial and so good unto us, *Oh taste and see how good the Lord is*² [ver. 8]; for by the goodness we find in the angels, we may take a taste of the goodness that is in God. If it be a great goodness in the angels to encamp about us, how great is his goodness that gives it them in charge? for the angels would not do it if God did not command them; alas, they could not do it if God did not enable them. Oh, then, taste and see how good the Lord is; not how good the angels are, though they be good, and exceeding good in their kind as ministers; yet what is this to the goodness of God, who is the fountain of goodness to the angels themselves?

Oh, then, taste and see how good the Lord is; for taste

¹ Luke xvi. 22. ² Ps. xxxiv. 8: "O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him."

him we may, but we can but taste him while we live here : we shall not have a full comprehension of him till we come to see as we are seen, when we shall need no more encamping of angels round about us.

Oh, then, taste and see how good the Lord is. But how can we taste him that is not bodily ? how see him that is not visible ? Not him, indeed, but his goodness ; and not his goodness neither in itself, but in its effects ; and not in its effects neither, as they shall be, but as they are, which, God knows, is but a small part of that they shall be.

Oh, then, taste and see how good the Lord is. If you would but taste him, you would never take pleasure in other meat ; if you would but see him, you would never delight in other object. O my soul, if thou couldst but taste the sweetness, if but see the goodness that is in God, it would make thee fall into a greater ecstasy than that of St. Peter at the sight of Christ's glory in the Mount ;¹ at least, it would wean thee from all the pleasures that the taste or the sight can minister to thee in this vain world ; for, alas, what are the pleasures of the taste to the sweetness that is in God, but as bitter aloes to the sweetest honey ? What are the delights that pass by the senses to the delight in God that passeth all understanding ? May I not justly say now, *Blessed is the man that trusteth in him* ; for he that trusteth in God, and he only, is like to be admitted to taste the sweetness and to see the goodness that is in God, which only are the things that can make us blessed. What is it to trust in God but to depend wholly upon him, and to put all our confidence in him ? To trust in the world, is to lean upon a broken reed ; to trust in ourselves, is to lean upon a shadow : only to trust in God is the true *terra firma* [firm earth] where the angels pitch their tents, and where, if we fix ourselves, the gates of hell can never prevail against us.² What preserved Jonah in the whale's belly,³ what Daniel in the lions' den,⁴ but only their trust in God ? O then, my soul, do thou also trust in God, and he will be the same God to thee, the same safeguard in thy dangers, as he was to

¹ Luke ix. 32, 33.² Matt. xvi. 18.³ Jonah i. 17.⁴ Dan. vi. 22.

Jonah and to Daniel ; but yet let thy trusting in him be such as that thou presume not, for there are certain bounds that must not be passed. It is as dangerous to go too far in trusting him as to be too short ; and as it is faith that puts us on for coming too short, so it is fear that keeps us off from going too far : *O therefore fear the LORD, ye his saints ; for there is no want to them that fear him* [ver. 9]. Verily, a strong motive to make us fear God, seeing he that fears him shall want nothing ; and yet the motive not so strong but the reason as apparent, for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom ;¹ and wisdom, I may say, is the godly man's purveyor ; and what marvel then if he want nothing that hath so cunning a purveyor as wisdom to keep him from want : but then it must be from want of things that are good, for to want other things is no disparagement to wisdom's purveyance. O that men would understand how to distinguish between things that are truly good indeed, and things that but only seem good ! We should then have a better world than we have, and men would never complain of want when they have but too much, never be so earnest for supply of things that, truly considered, are but merely superfluous. If, therefore, one that fears God be in any want, we may know that the thing he wants is not good ; for if it were good, he should not want it : it may perhaps be good in itself, but not good for him ; and if not good for him, he cannot be truly said to want it, because indeed he were better without it.

But is fear a thing of such force to supply our wants ? One would rather think that boldness and courage should supply them. No, my soul, for what creature so courageous as the lion ? *Yet the young lions do lack, and suffer hunger* ² [ver. 10]. Whether they be young lions as depending upon the provision of their parents, or young in the strength of their youth that can provide for themselves, yet they sometimes lack and suffer hunger ; for, indeed, strength of body is not the best purveyor. No, my soul, nothing but wisdom makes the true purveyance, and no wisdom without the fear

¹ Prov. ix. 10. ² Ps. xxxiv. 10 : "The young lions do lack and suffer hunger ; but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing."

of the Lord, and therefore none but they that fear the Lord, can be free from want.

But is not this a fearful doctrine, that either we must fear or else we must want? Were it not as good to want as to have our wants supplied by fear? Is not the remedy worse than the disease? Alas, this is but the objection of children, either children in years or children in understanding, who know not what fear it is I mean, and therefore, *Come, ye children, and hearken to me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD* [ver. 11]. It is not a fear that you need be afraid of; it is a fear that will free you from all other fears; it is a fear that is active, where all other fears are passive. It is a fear that works in love, and who would not love such a fear? It is a fear that is joined with joy,—a fear not to offend, but a joy for not offending. It is a fear not so much of God's justice as of his mercy, for there is mercy with him that he may be feared. It is not a fear that will shorten your life, but be a means to prolong it; but then it must not be a bare speculative fear, but you must put it in practice; and these may be the rules: *Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile; depart from evil, and do good; seek peace and pursue it* [ver. 12, 13, 14]. Long life was once promised before to them that honour their parents,² and here it is promised again to them that love their neighbours; for these rules are as the whole body of moral philosophy, and are therefore delivered in six parts, like the six commandments of the second table, which only concern our duty to neighbours, and in all of them the quality of chief predominance, and which keeps them all in tune, is fear. Keep thy tongue from evil, for fear of the evil that may ensue; and thy lips from speaking guile, for fear lest thy guile be discovered to thy shame. Depart from evil, for fear of infecting; and do good, for fear of repenting. Seek peace, for fear of wanting it; and pursue it, for fear of losing it. The two first precepts are the duty of words, for words must first be regulated before works can be actuated; and

¹ Ps. xxxiv. 12, 13, 14: "What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it." ² Exod. xx. 12.

they are both negative. Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile; for it is not required of the tongue to be eloquent, or of the lips to deliver oracles. It is enough in the tongue if it be not irreverent to superiors, nor detracting from equals. It is enough in the lips if they be not charms to deceive, nor equivocations to delude.

The other precepts are the duty of works, and they are four, where the precepts of words were but two, because we must be more in works than in words; and they are all affirmative, for it is against the nature of a work to be in the negative, for so working should be no better than idleness: the two former are general, as general as good and evil; that if we meet with anything that is evil, our part is to depart; for there is no demurring upon evil, no dallying with baits, lest staying, we be stayed as Eve was;¹ therefore depart from evil. If we meet with anything that is good, our work is to fall a-working; for virtue consists in action, and is not so proper to be talked of as to be done. We never read of any reward for good words only, but all reward is only for good works: Because thou hast done this,² saith God to Abraham. Therefore do good. The two last precepts are special, whether we call them special as being particular, or as being excellent, for so is peace. It is the legacy that was left us by Christ,³ and who would lose Christ's legacy for want of seeking it? Therefore seek peace, and pursue it; but not pursue peace, for this were to make war upon peace; but pursue the seeking of peace; for though it be said, Seek, and ye shall find,⁴ yet it is not said how long we must seek before we shall find; if therefore, seeking peace, you find it not at first, pursue the seeking it, and you shall find it at last. Agree with thine adversary while thou art in the way;⁵ this is to seek peace; leave thine offering at the altar, and go first and be reconciled;⁶ this is to pursue it. Or perhaps the counsel that St. Paul gives to Timothy may express it plainer: Be instant in season and out of season.⁷ To be instant in season, is to seek peace; to be instant out of season, is to pursue it. Indeed, if a man

¹ Gen. iii. 2. ² Gen. xxii. 16. ³ John xiv. 27. ⁴ Matt. vii. 7 ⁵ Matt. v. 25. ⁶ Matt. v. 24. ⁷ 2 Tim. iv. 2.

desire long life, and to see good days, he must have a special care of peace; whether it be peace in the humours, or peace in the passions; whether peace with God, or peace with men: they are all prolongers of life; and life is never shortened or disquieted but for want of peace in one of these; and therefore that you may not be to seek of long life, seek peace, and pursue it.

And now, O my soul, is there not great cause that the fear of the Lord should animate all our words and works, when so great a majesty as the eye of God is looking upon them, when so sacred an auditory as the ears of God are hearkening to them? For *The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry* [ver. 15]; and can any man be so without shame as to be without fear, when he is the spectacle which God is pleased to look upon, the speaker which he vouchsafes to hearken to? But, O my soul, as it cannot but make thee fear, so it cannot but make thee joy; for what greater honour than to be the object of God's eyes and ears? What though the world regard thee not, as long as God regards thee? What are the eyes and ears of the world but eyes and ears of scorn, or else of envy,—of scorn when in adversity, and of envy in prosperity? But the eyes of the Lord are righteous eyes, and are therefore upon the righteous; his ears are ears of compassion, and therefore are open to their cry. But are not the eyes of the Lord as well upon the wicked? and what privilege then is this to the righteous? No, my soul, his eyes are upon the righteous, but they are against the wicked; and not only his eyes, but his whole face, is against them, to cut off their remembrance from the earth [ver. 16]. O my soul, as thou considerest with joy the great force that is in righteousness, which draws the eyes and opens the ears of God, so consider with trembling the great force that is in sin, which not only turns away his eyes, and stops his ears, but makes him to bend his whole face in fury; that if his favours of looking upon us and hearkening to us cannot win us to fear him out of love, at least the bending his face

¹ Ps. xxxiv. 16: "The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth."

against us in anger may force us to fear him out of terror ; for he bends not his face to make a show only, as though he did but set a face upon it ; but it is to cut off the very remembrance of them that do evil from the earth.

But may not the wicked erect tombs and monuments that will preserve their remembrance for many ages, perhaps as long as the earth shall endure ? and how then is their remembrance cut off from the earth ? But from what earth ? is it not meant from the land of the living ?¹ that in this may be seen the different condition between the godly and the wicked ? for as it is said here that the remembrance of the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, so it is said in another place of the godly that they shall be had in everlasting remembrance ;² and where is any everlasting remembrance to be had but in the land of the living ? Indeed, to have their remembrance cut off in this earth is not worthy of God's threatening : it is the cutting off from the land of the living which is the blotting them out of the book of life ;³ that is a work worthy of God's setting his face against them, and this may well be called a cutting off, not only because it shall come suddenly upon them, but because they are never like to be heard, alas ! never like to be heard of any more, which can never be the condition of the godly, for they can never be so out of remembrance but that they shall be always heard of God : For *The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth and delivereth them out of all their troubles*⁴ [ver. 17].

But how is it like to be true that the godly shall never be forgotten, when they seem to be forgotten already while they live ? for how else should it happen that they are more in trouble,⁵ in more trouble than other men, but that God hath cast them out of his remembrance ? O my soul, their very being in trouble is a certain argument that God remembers them : if he had not remembered Job and his righteousness,⁶ he would never have given Satan so much leave as he did to trouble him. For indeed, though troubles be judgments to the wicked, and are as the first blows to cut off their remem-

¹ Ps. xxvii. 13 ; cxlii. 5. ² Ps. cxii. 6. ³ Rev. iii. 5. ⁴ Ps. xxxiv. 17 : "*The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.*"
⁵ Ps. lxxiii. 5 : "They (the wicked) are not in trouble as other men." ⁶ Job i. 8.

brance from the earth, yet they are but trials to the godly, and do but serve to make their remembrance be the fresher. Do we not see how trees are nipped with frost and cold, and not so much as a leaf left hanging upon them, scarce so much as life remaining in them? but is it not to renew in them the fresher springing, and to make way for fruits in a greater plenty? And such are the troubles of the godly: they end in deliverance; and though they be bitter for the present, yet they make the joys afterward to taste the sweeter. And what marvel if God hear the cry of the righteous, being so nigh unto them as he is? For *The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart* [ver. 18]; not broken with envy, as many are; not broken with despair, as some are; but broken with sense of their sin, as the righteous are; for this only is the broken heart to which God is nigh, and he is not nigh it in vain. No, my soul, it is good having God to be our neighbour, for he saves all them to whom he is nigh; he *saves all them that be of a contrite and humble heart*: the lower they are in their own eyes, the higher they are in his; and when their heart is broken with sense of their sin, he makes it whole again with supply of his grace. It is true, *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers them out of all*¹ [ver. 19]. For the righteous have many enemies, and therefore must needs have many troubles; but their troubles are not troublesome, because they have the Lord for their deliverer;² if it be sickness, he makes their bed in their sickness;³ if it be hunger, he fills the hungry with good things, when he sends the rich empty away;⁴ if it be death itself, *Domini, Domini sunt exitus mortis*,—the issues of death are all in God's hands;⁵ and all this while, though their heart be broken, yet their bones are whole still. They may have thorns in the flesh, but not a bone of theirs is broken⁷ [ver. 20]; for one of their bones is faith, which though it may be shaken, yet it cannot be broken. Another of their bones is hope, which though it

¹ Ps. xxxiv. 18: "The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." ² Ps. xxxiv. 19: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the LORD delivereth him out of them all."

³ 2 Sam. xxii. 2; Ps. xviii. 2. ⁴ Ps. xli. 3. ⁵ Luke i. 53. ⁶ Ps. lxxviii. 20. ⁷ Ps. xxxiv. 20:

"He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken."

may be battered, yet it cannot be broken; and patience is a bone which may be vexed, but can never be broken; for in all of them the Lord hath a hand: he upholds the righteous¹ that they cannot fall; he strengthens them that they cannot faint; and as long as their bones be whole, they are able to stand upright, and shrink not from any burden that either the flesh or the world can lay upon them. And though David in this have an eye perhaps upon Christ, of whom indeed there was not a bone broken,² yet what is spoken of the head may not incongruously be applied to the members; and in the soundness of Christ's bones, the bones of the godly are kept from breaking. But the troubles of the wicked are of another nature, for *Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate* [ver. 21]. Their hearts perhaps are broken too; but because they are not broken with sense of their sin, but with spite and malice to the righteous, there shall be none to make them whole, but their own evil shall be their own destruction; and having none to deliver them, they shall be left desolate and without all hope of help. But shall not the wicked then have this good by being desolate, that as they have none to help them, so they have none to hurt them? Alas! it needs not; they do it fast enough themselves; for sin is a recoiling poison, it turns violently back upon them that commit it; and it may be truly said of every wicked man that he is *felo de se*—a murderer of himself. Though righteousness of itself doth not save the righteous, but they need a Saviour besides, yet wickedness of itself destroys the wicked, they need no other destroyer: *Perditio tua ex te, O Israel*,—Thy destruction is from thyself, O Israel.³

And, O my soul, what great examples there are to verify this saying, They that hate the righteous shall be desolate! When Cain hated the righteous Abel, was he not thereupon made desolate, and became a vagabond,⁴ forsaken both of God and Man? but in a higher degree, when the wicked Jews hated Christ the righteous, was there not a voice heard as of angels, saying, *Migremus hinc*—Let us depart from this place,⁵

¹ Ps. xxxvii. 17. ² John xix. 36. ³ Hos. xiii. 9. ⁴ Gen. iv. 12. ⁵ A traditional incident said to have preceded the destruction of the temple.

and thereupon left them desolate, without prince or prophet, without temple or altar, to this day? You may say perhaps that Cain might easily be made desolate, having killed his brother in a time when there was no more in the whole world but that one family; but how can the wicked be made desolate now, when *totus mundus in maligno est positus*¹ [the whole world lieth in wickedness], when all the world is full of them, and no beasts so herd together as they do? But is it not that desolateness consists not so much in want of company as in want of comfort? was Job the less desolate for having company, of whom to say, Miserable comforters are ye all?² much less shall the wicked be the less desolate for having company of whom to say, Miserable tormentors are ye all; for, alas, all their company shall be either companions in their torments, or companions their tormentors, which can never be the case of the godly; for though they be not so perfect not to have their faults, yet they are so happy not to have them imputed; for being God's servants, *He will redeem them*³ [ver. 22]; though they be taken captive, yet he will not suffer them to continue captives; but rather than not redeem them, he will give his only Son to be their ransom.⁴

But yet how can the godly choose but be desolate, when the whole world scarce affords enough to make a company? and where then can company be had to keep them from being desolate? O my soul, they have angels to pitch their tents about them while they live here, and hereafter they shall come to be citizens in the New Jerusalem,⁵ where they shall have company enough—priests and patriarchs, prophets and apostles, martyrs and confessors, blessed virgins, and chiefly the Blessed Virgin; but, above all, where they shall see the blessed face of God, whose only sight is able, whose sight is only able to keep from being desolate; and then at least I shall be as able to perform my vow as now I am ready to make it: I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

¹ 1 John v. 19. ² Job xvi. 2. ³ Ps. xxxiv. 22: "The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate." ⁴ 1 Tim. ii. 6; John iii. 16. ⁵ Rev. xxi. and xxii.

How amiable *are* thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts! 2. My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. 3. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, *even* thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King, and my God. 4. Blessed *are* they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah. 5. Blessed *is* the man whose strength *is* in thee; in whose heart *are* the ways of *them*. 6. *Who* passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools. 7. They go from strength to strength, *every one of them* in Zion appeareth before God. 8. O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah. 9. Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed. 10. For a day in thy courts *is* better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. 11. For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good *thing* will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. 12. O LORD of hosts, blessed *is* the man that trusteth in thee.—PSALM lxxxiv.

MEDITATIONS

UPON

THE EIGHTY-FOURTH PSALM OF DAVID.

WHEN we cannot express the greatness of a thing in direct terms, we are fain to fly to wonder ; and so doth David here, because he cannot express sufficiently how amiable the tabernacles of the Lord are ; he therefore falls to wondering, and helps himself with a question, *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts!* [ver. 1]. But is not David's wondering itself wonderful, that the tabernacles of the Lord of hosts should be so wonderfully amiable ? Is it not a wonder they should be amiable at all ? For are not his tabernacles tents of war, and is there anything in war that can be amiable ? If he had said, How terrible are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts, his wonder had been with some congruity, for the Lord of hosts is terrible in all his works ;¹ but to say, How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts, seems to imply a contradiction, for though they may be amiable as they are tabernacles, yet they must needs be terrible as they are tabernacles of the Lord of hosts ; and when this terribleness hath made an abatement in their amiableness, what place will be left for wonder to give cause to say, How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts ? But if he had said, How terrible are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts, though it might have been wonderful in the degree, yet it could not be wonderful in the kind ; for what wonder

¹ Ps. lvi. 3 : " Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works ! "

is it if the tabernacles of the Lord of hosts be terrible? But when he saith, How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts, this is not only wonderful in the degree, but in the kind much more. For what can be more wonderful than that, being tabernacles of the Lord of hosts, they should be amiable, and so amiable as to be wondered at? But is it not that God is in himself so amiable that all things of his, even his terrors themselves, are amiable?—his tabernacles and his tents, his sword and his spear, his darts and his arrows—all amiable; terrible, no doubt, to his enemies, but amiable—wonderful amiable—to all that love and fear him; and great reason they should be so, seeing they are all in their defence and for their safeguard. Though they be tabernacles of the Lord of hosts to the wicked, yet they are courts of the Prince of Peace¹ to the godly, and this makes my soul to long for the courts of the Lord² [ver. 2]. For I desire indeed to be a courtier, yet not as I am now; God knows I am very unfit for it; but because God's courts are such, they make any one fit that but comes into them: they receive not men fit, but make them fit; and he that was before but a shrub in Baca,³ as soon as he comes into the courts of the Lord, is presently made a cedar in Lebanon.

Indeed, if his tabernacles be so wonderful amiable, they must needs be as wonderful attractive, for there is no such adamant⁴ as amiableness—nothing that so powerfully attracts and draws all hearts unto it. And to know the measure of their amiableness by the power of their attracting, you need but look upon my soul; *for my soul longeth and even fainteth for the courts of the LORD*, which it would never do if it were not for their wonderful amiableness, that attracts and draws it by a kind of violence—indeed by a kind violence—unto them.

Every amiableness is not so great to make a longing, nor

¹ Isa. ix. 6. ² Ps. lxxxiv. 2: "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." ³ Baca (ver. 6), weeping, has been translated by a mulberry bush; see 2 Sam. v. 23, 24, where the plural noun, בְּעֵצֵי הַבְּעָחַיִם (A.V. mulberry trees), is the name of a certain tree so called from its weeping, i.e. distilling (a plant) similar to the balsam-tree, and distilling white tears of a pungent acrid taste. (Robinson's Gesenius's Heb. Lex. s. v.)
⁴ Properly diamond,—here, of course, the magnet.

every longing so great to make a fainting, nor every fainting so great to make the soul to faint. Oh, then, consider how great this amiableness is, which makes my soul not only to long, but to faint with longing; and blame me not for fainting, as though it were my own fault that would not restrain my longing; for seeing his tabernacles are of infinite amiableness, they must needs work in me an infinite delighting, and that delighting an infinite longing; and what restraint can there be of that which is infinite? No, alas, my fainting is but answerable to my longing, and my longing but answerable to the amiableness. If I had the offer made me which was made to Christ, to enjoy all the kingdoms of the earth,¹ but with condition to want the courts of the Lord, this want would bring to my soul a greater grief than that enjoying would give it contentment; for seeing his tabernacles are so amiable where he is Lord of Hosts, how amiable must they needs be where he is Prince of Peace? and Prince of Peace he is in his courts, though in his camp he be Lord of Hosts.

And that you may know it is not the weakness of my soul that it faints with longing (for indeed weak spirits are apt to faint upon every light occasion), but that it is the very operation of the wonderful attractive power that is in the amiableness of his courts, see my heart, and my flesh also, how they are drawn to long after the Lord, which they would never do if it were not for some wonderful amiableness that is in him; for you may well think it must be an adamant of a wonderful attractive power that can draw these heavy irons of my heart and my flesh unto it; for indeed, though my soul have a longing for the courts of the Lord, yet my body perhaps could be content to want them. There are courts in the world that might please my body as well, perhaps better than these; but God forbid—God forbid I should be one to have my soul and body divided while they are united—to have my soul run one way and my body another. No, I am none of those; but as soon as my soul longed for the courts of the Lord, my heart and my flesh fell a-longing for the living God. As my soul longed for the place, so my heart

¹ Matt. iv. 8, 9.

and my flesh for the person ; for my heart and my flesh are of a duller apprehension ; they must have a present enjoying of that they long for, or they cannot be satisfied ; but my soul is of a clearer sight, and knows if it can but come to the place where he is, it shall be sure withal to enjoy his presence, and with his presence his person. The soul indeed is a spiritual substance, and therefore it is natural to the soul to long after spiritual things ; but the flesh is an earthly substance, and therefore it is natural to the flesh to long after earthly things ; and as long as these two are linked in the body together, they will always be working upon one another—always seeking to draw each other to their party ; and if the soul can draw the flesh to go her spiritual way, then all is well ; it is as it should be ; but if the flesh draw the soul to go her earthly way, then all is out of order ; there will be no longing for the courts of the Lord, for they are spiritual, and are never longed for but where the soul is predominant and hath the leading. And this is the order in David's longing : first his soul begins to long for the courts of the Lord, and this is yet but a single cord ; but then comes in the heart and the flesh too, and make it a cord of three that is impossible to be broken.¹ Indeed the courts of the Lord are so exceeding amiable, that it is impossible but every soul must needs long after them ; but yet every soul considers not what belongs to this longing, but as Baalam longed to die the death of the righteous,² yet was loth to live the life of the righteous,³ so there are many that long for the courts of the Lord, but are loth to live the life of such courtiers. They that be in kings' houses wear silk and soft raiment,⁴ because so it is fit for the honour of the place ; and they that will be in the courts of the Lord must likewise wear raiment that is fit for the holiness of the place. They must be clothed with the soft raiment of meekness and humility ;⁵ they must put on the robe of righteousness⁶ and the garment of sincerity ; or because they are courts of the Lord of Hosts, their clothing must rather be in armour, as St. Paul expresseth it ; they must

¹ Eccles. iv. 12. ² Numb. xxiii. 10. ³ Numb. xxxi. 7, 8, 16. ⁴ Matt. xi. 8
⁵ 1 Pet. v. 5. ⁶ Isa. lxi. 10.

take the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit;¹ and if they come thus clothed and thus armed, they may justly then be said to long for the courts of the Lord; but if they wear not these garments, their longing will prove but a false conception, and they shall hear it said, Friend, what makest thou here without a wedding garment?²

If my God were as the gods of the heathen, that have bodies, but live not, that have ears, but hear not,³ my heart and my flesh would then never cry after him that could not hear them; but now that he is a living God, and hath ears to hear, how can they now forbear to cry after him, that cannot be without him? for, alas, if he should leave them, what would become of them? what would my heart be but as a dead corpse, and what would my flesh be but as the coffin?

Thou affordest, O Lord, thy meanest creatures their places of rest and pleasure: *The sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young*⁴ [ver. 3]; and wilt thou not afford me to enjoy thine altars, the only places of rest and pleasure to my soul? Alas, O Lord, if thou wilt not afford me thine altars for places of pleasure, at least afford them to me for places of devotion, that if I cannot make them a nest for my young ones, my humble meditations and my penitent submissions, at least I may offer upon them the sacrifices of prayer, of praise, and thanksgiving.⁵

I knew before, by thy courts, thou wert a king; and now I know, by thine altars, thou art a God; that confidently now I can say, O Lord of Hosts, my King, and my God; that if I feared thee before as Lord of Hosts, I honour thee more now as my King, and adore thee more yet as my God, which as they are to thee the tender⁶ of my dutifulness, so they are no less to me the means of my blessed-

¹ Eph. vi. 14-17. ² Matt. xxii. 12: "Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?" ³ Ps. cxxxv. 15-17. ⁴ Ps. lxxxiv. 3: "Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, ~~even~~ thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God." ⁵ Ps. cvii. 22; Jer. xvii. 26. ⁶ Offer.

ness ; for *Blessed are they that dwell in thy house : they will still be praising thee* [ver. 4].

But, alas, how happens this ? There were tabernacles before, as belonging to a Lord ; and courts, as belonging to a King ; and altars, as belonging to a God ; and now to be but a house, as belonging to a private man ? and so all this great rising to end in a fall ? No, my soul, it is no fall ; it is an aggregation rather of all the other, for where his tabernacles did but serve to show his power, his courts but to show his majesty, his altars but to show his deity, his house serves to show them all, for in his house there will be still praising him, and his praise and glory is the sum of all. Or is it, that to dwell in God's house is a kind of appropriating him to ourselves, seeing his tabernacles and his courts lie open to strangers, his house open to none but his servants, and seeing [that] in the nearness to God, and conversing with him, consists all true blessedness ; therefore, Blessed are they that dwell in his house. But how dwell in it ? Not to look in sometimes, as we pass by ; or to stay in it a time, as we do at an inn ; but to be constant abiders in it day and night, as to which we have devoted ourselves, and vowed our service.

But it may be doubted, when David saith, Blessed are they that dwell in God's house, what dwelling it is he means ; whether dwelling in it as tenants or as servants ; for if as tenants, it is like there is some rent to be paid, and there is small blessedness in paying of rent : it would be a more blessed thing if they could dwell in his house and pay him no rent. If as servants, it is like there is some work to be done, and there is small blessedness in working : it would be a more blessed thing if they could be his servants, and do no work ; and how then comes any blessedness in by dwelling in his house ? Indeed, take it either way, let them dwell in his house as tenants, or as servants, and they shall be blessed ; let them have rent to pay as tenants, let them have work to do as servants, and yet they shall be blessed ; and that which may seem most strange, the rent and the work, which seem to hinder their blessedness, is the very thing that makes them be blessed ; for

they are both but one thing, both but praising of God ; and praising of God is the only thing that, whether they be tenants or servants, whether bond or free, will make them be blessed.

And yet there is a dwelling that hath not yet been thought of—a dwelling, indeed, that makes the true blessedness ; and it is, to dwell in God's house neither as tenants nor yet as servants, but as sons ; for neither tenants nor servants abide in the house for ever ; only the son abideth for ever ;¹ and therefore, though the house of God seem a meaner title than his tabernacles and his courts, yet to us it is the more comfortable title, seeing it makes us to be sons, which neither his tabernacles nor his courts can do.

But how appears it to be true that they who dwell in God's house will always be praising him, seeing it is but seldom seen that servants be so forward to praise their masters ? O my soul, it is not so much the good dispositions of the servants, as the infinite worthiness of the master, that makes them to praise him, for when they see the admirable economy of his government, when they see how sweetly he disposeth all things in weight and measure,² when they find him to use them more like children than servants ; what heart can be so ungrateful as not to praise him ? and seeing by dwelling in God's house they see these things continually, therefore they that dwell in his house will always be praising him.

But is it not a strange reason of blessedness to say they are blessed because they are still praising him ? To be praised themselves, might perhaps be some blessedness, but what blessedness can it be to praise another ? Indeed if that other were but such another as ourselves, it could be none ; but when that other is such as that there is not such another, or rather not another at all, to praise such a one certainly must needs be blessedness, or there can be none ; and such a one is God ; for, alas, what are we, but that in him we live, and move, and have our being ;³ He only is all in all.⁴ O my soul, if it were not for praising of God,

¹ John viii. 35.
xv. 28.

² Wisd. xi. 20 ; Eccclus. xlii. 7.

³ Acts xvii. 28.

⁴ 1 Cor.

there had never been created such a thing as praise ; at least we may justly say that God and praise are as truly relatives ¹ as any that are found in either art or nature.

You may say, then, it is like to be an easy matter to be blessed, if there go no more to blessedness but praising of God. Mark therefore how David speaks : They will be still praising him. It is not enough to praise him ; it must be a praising him still, before it will make a blessedness ; and though to praise God be an easy matter, yet to praise him still will be found a busy work ; indeed, to flesh and blood a miserable work ; for if I be still praising him, what time shall I have for any pleasure ? O my soul, if thou make it not thy pleasure—thy chief, thy only pleasure—to be praising him, thou art not like in haste to come to blessedness. And marvel not that David speaks thus under the law, when St. Paul under the gospel saith as much : Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do else, let all be done to the glory and praise of God.² And, indeed, how can I doubt of attaining to blessedness by praising of God, when it is praising of God that makes the angels in heaven blessed ? for the seeing of God would never make them blessed, if, seeing him, they did not praise him ; and praising him would never make them blessed, if they did not praise him continually, crying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth ;³ for as we praise God here on earth with saying, O Lord God of Hosts, because here he fighteth for us against our enemies, so we shall praise him in heaven with saying, O Lord God of Sabaoth,⁴ because there he will give us rest from our enemies.

But if it be thought that praising of God will not be enough to make blessedness, or not to make blessedness enough, at least take this with it, and it will surely be enough : *Blessed is the man whose strength is in God, and in whose heart his ways are*⁵ [ver. 5] ; for though our praising of God, being our own work, must needs be too weak to

¹ Correlates. ² 1 Cor. x. 31 : "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." ³ Te Deum ; cf. Rev. iv. 8. ⁴ Query, *Sabbath*, i.e., rest. ⁵ Ps. lxxxiv. 5 : "Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee ; in whose heart are the ways of them."

make a blessedness, yet when our strength is in God, this makes it his work, and then our blessedness hath a sure foundation. When we trust to our own strength for blessedness, we are often deceived, indeed as often as always; but when our strength is in God, we may rest secure; our blessedness is upon a rock, and cannot be shaken.¹ But then God's ways must be in our hearts; for what way hath his strength to the heart, if his ways be not in the heart? That's their place, if we look for strength from him. Are we not in a continual fight against sin; and have we any strength to fight but only in him? and will he take it well to be placed in a wing? No, my soul, he will strengthen us no longer than he is placed in the heart of the battle; that's his place, if we look to be strengthened in him.

It is not enough that God's ways be known if they be not walked in, nor walked in if not embraced; and it is not enough to embrace them with the arms, which is oftentimes feigned, and but only complimentary; they must be embraced with the two arms of the heart, integrity and sincerity: integrity will embrace them all, sincerity will embrace no other. Though God's ways be many, yet they must all go into one heart; if any be left out, the rest will not tarry; though they must be in singleness of heart, yet they must not be single in the heart: they are fruits that grow in clusters, not one by one.

There are many that have God's ways in their mouths—can talk holily and make sermons of godliness, though they be no preachers; but because they draw near to God with their lips and their hearts are far from him,² they are like to have but the Pharisee's entertainment, not so well justified as the publican.³ There are many that have God's ways in their hands; they give alms plentifully, they distribute their bread to the poor liberally, but because their left hand knows what their right hand doth, they have their reward already.⁴ They that have God's ways in their hearts, they only are in the right way to blessedness, and no rubs of the world can turn them out of the way; for when God's ways

¹ Ps. xxvii. 5.² Isa. xxix. 13.³ Luke xviii. 14.⁴ Matt. vi. 2, 3.

are in the heart together, they lend assistance to one another ; for *passing through the valley of Baca, they make it a well ; the rain also filleth the pools* [ver. 6]. That which seemed an impediment turns to a furtherance ; at least, no misery can be so great, no estate so barren, but a godly heart can make it a well out of which to draw forth water of comfort—either water to cleanse, and make it a way to repentance, or water to cool, and make it a way to patience, or water to moisten, and make it a way of growing in grace ; and if the well happen to be dry, and afford no water from below, yet the rain shall fill their pools, and supply them with water from above ; if natural forces be not sufficient, there shall be supernatural graces added to assist them ; that though troubles of the world seem rubs in the way to blessedness, yet in truth they are none ; they hinder not arriving at the mark we aim at ; they hinder us not from being made members of Zion ; they hinder us not from approaching the presence of God : no, my soul, they are rather helps, for by this means we go from strength to strength¹ [ver. 7], from strength of patience to strength of hope, from strength of hope to strength of faith, from strength of faith to strength of vision ; and then will be accomplished that which David speaks here : Blessed is the man whose strength is in God, and in whose heart his ways are.

If my strength were not in God, I should not dare to call upon him, being Lord of hosts ; but now that my strength is in him, and that I know he is Lord of Hosts for me, and not against me,—a shield to me,² a sword only to my enemies,—now I have confidence to say, *O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer : give ear, O God of Jacob* [ver. 8] ; for as I doubt not but he will hear me, though he be Lord of hosts, so I have much more confidence he will give ear unto me, being the God of Jacob ; for he hath made a covenant with Jacob and with his posterity for ever,³ that he will be their God, and they shall be his people,⁴ of which number it is my happiness that I am one ; not after the flesh, which

¹ Ps. lxxxiv. 7 : "They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God." ² Ps. xxxiii. 20. ³ Gen. xxviii. 13—15. ⁴ Jer. xi. 4 ; Rev. xxi. 3.

profiteth nothing,¹ but according to faith, the only thing that makes the true Israelite.²

But yet what good will it do me that God hear my prayer, and give ear unto it, if he be still averse and turn away his face? Oh, therefore, *Behold, O LORD, our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed*³ [ver. 9]; for I shall never come to look upon thy face if thou vouchsafe not first to look upon mine: if thou afford me not as well the benefit of thine eyes to look upon me, as the favour of thine ears to hear me, I shall be left only to a bare expectation, but never come to the happiness of fruition; but when thou vouchsafest to look upon my face, that look of thine hath an influence of all true blessedness, and makes me find what a happiness it is to have the God of Jacob for my shield.

But it should seem that this prayer belongs only to David, —or at least to kings who, like David, are the Lord's anointed; and what is it then to us that are private persons? It is true, indeed, that kings are the Lord's anointed in a special manner, but yet every child of God is his anointed too; for why else is it said of Christ that he was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows,⁴ if it be not that his fellows (meaning the children of God) be anointed too? Anointed, no doubt, with the oil of grace, but to be anointed with the oil of gladness is the very thing I pray for here, the very thing that makes me long so much for the courts of the Lord. *For one day in his courts is better than a thousand*⁵ [ver. 10]. It is not so much the length of time as the measure of joy that makes the blessedness; or is it that one day which shall never end, as the day is in God's courts, is better than a thousand which have an end, as all the days of this world are? If he had said, One day in his courts is as good as a thousand, though this had been a mighty odds, yet it had been but a thousand to one—there had at least been some proportion; but when he saith, One day in his courts is better than a thousand, this seems to

¹ John vi. 63. ² Rom. ix. 6—8. ³ Ps. lxxxiv. 9: "Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed." ⁴ Ps. xlv. 7. ⁵ Ps. lxxxiv. 10: "For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

exceed all possibility of comparison, and leaves no place for any proportion. Indeed, one day in his courts gives seisin¹ of eternity, where a thousand that are spent anywhere else are but steps of mortality. If I be but one day in his courts, I shall see that which will be a joy unto me all the days of my life; where if I be a thousand in any other courts, I shall see nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit,² that which will grieve me to think of as often as I remember it. And as it is true in respect of time, so it is no less true in respect of place; for *I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.* But is it such a disparagement to be a doorkeeper? What was the angel with the flaming sword but the doorkeeper of Paradise?³ and is there not a conceit that St. Peter is the doorkeeper of heaven?⁴ which, though it be a vain conceit, yet it may lead us to this congruous interpretation of David's speech, to conceive as if he said that he had rather be St. Peter in the house of God than be Annas or Caiaphas in the court of Herod.⁵ Indeed, in the sense that Christ is a door,⁶ David may well be content to be a doorkeeper; and though in God's house there be many mansions,⁷ yet, seeing all of them are glorious, even the doorkeeper's place is not without its glory. But if you think the office to be mean, consider then whose officer he is; for even a doorkeeper is an officer in God's house, and God never displaceth his officers unless it be to advance them to a higher; where in the courts of princes the greatest officers are oftentimes displaced—turned off often with disgrace. However it be, it shows not only the great glory of God's house, but the great humility of David's heart, and that he is not of the ambitious humour of the mother of Zebedee's sons, whom no place would serve for her sons but to have one of them sit at his right hand, the other at his left.⁸ O gracious God, grant me but a doorkeeper's place in thy house, and I will never aspire after any higher room: not that I desire to let in and keep

¹ Seisin (in fact) is an actual taking possession in person; seisin (in law) is when something is done which the law accounts a seisin. (Bailey's Dict.) * Eccles. i. 14.

² Gen. iii. 24: "Cherubims and a flaming sword," etc. * Matt. xvi. 18. * John xviii. 13, 24, 28. * John x. 9. * John xiv. 2. * Matt. xx. 21.

out whom I please, but that I may thereby have liberty to walk in thy house, and to enjoy thy presence, in whose presence is the fulness of joy for evermore.¹ What are the tents of wickedness but like caves that have no light, and like vineyards that have no fences? and is there any comparison to be made between such tents and the meanest place in the house of God, where God not only affordeth light, but is himself the light;² not only is a defender, but the defence itself?³ *For the LORD is a sun and a shield: the LORD will give grace and glory*⁴ [ver. 11]. I had heard before that *in sole posuit tabernaculum suum*⁵ [in the sun hath he set his tabernacle]. God hath placed his tabernacle in the sun, but I never knew he was himself a sun till now: but what sun?—not the sun that is but the child of light, but the Sun who is the father of lights;⁶ not the sun that was not till three days after it was light,⁷ but the Sun that was before ever any light was made; not the sun which the heathen commit idolatry in worshipping,⁸ but the Sun whom it is idolatry not to worship. Oh that the heathen would all worship this Sun: it should not then be said, *Plures adorant solem orientem quam occidentem*—that more worship the sun rising than setting; for this Sun, once risen, never sets again; once shining, is never anymore eclipsed. Oh then vouchsafe, O God, if thou be a sun, to lighten my darkness; if a shield, to protect my weakness: if thou be a sun, warm my soul with the beams of devotion; if a shield, defend my soul from the blows of temptation: if thou be a sun, oh shine upon me with the light of thy countenance; if a shield, oh stand between me and the assaults of Satan; for, alas, O Lord, I am darkness and weakness, the anvil of temptations, the very butt of Satan, if thou be not a sun and a shield unto me. O my soul, God will do more than this: he will give grace and glory—grace to be a shield unto us, and glory to be a sun unto us; he will give grace to prevent us, and glory to follow us; grace to walk uprightly, and glory if

¹ Ps. xvi. 11. ² Rev. xxi. 23. ³ Ps. lix. 9, 17. ⁴ Ps. lxxxiv. 11: "For the LORD God is a sun and a shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." ⁵ Ps. xix. 4: "In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun." (Quoted from the Vulgate.) ⁶ Jas. i. 17. ⁷ Gen. i. 5, 14–19. ⁸ Deut. iv. 15, 19; Job xxxi. 26–28.

walking uprightly; grace for a foundation to glory, and glory for a crown to grace; and if these things be not enough, he will do more yet. Do thou but walk uprightly, and what good things soever there are in God's gift they shall all be given thee, for no good thing will God withhold from them that live uprightly.

But how is this true, when God oftentimes withholds riches, and honours, and health of body from men, though they walk never so uprightly? We may therefore know that honours, and riches, and bodily strength are none of God's good things; they are of the number of things indifferent, which God bestows promiscuously upon the just and unjust, as the rain to fall, and the sun to shine.¹ The good things of God are chiefly peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost,² in this life; fruition of God's presence, and vision of his blessed face, in the next; and these good things God never bestows upon the wicked, never withholds from the godly; and all are cast up in one sum, where it is said, *Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi videbunt Deum*—Blessed are the pure of heart (and such are only they that walk uprightly), for they shall see God.³ But is walking uprightly such a matter with God that it should be so rewarded? Is it not more pleasing to God to see us go stooping than walking upright, seeing stooping is the gait of humility, than which there is nothing to God more pleasing? It is, no doubt, a hard matter to stoop and go upright, both at once; yet both must be done, and both indeed are done, are done at once by every one that is godly. But when I say they are done both at once, I mean not of the body: I know two such postures in the body, both at once, are impossible; but the soul can do it,—the soul can stoop and go upright both at once; for then doth the soul walk upright before God when it stoops in humility before God and men.

And what remains now for David to do but to bring in the conclusion upon the premises, seeing the Lord of Hosts, though his name be dreadful, yet his nature is lovely; seeing he is a sun to cherish and a shield to defend; seeing he

¹ Matt. v. 45.² Rom. xiv. 17.³ Matt. v. 8.

gives grace and glory, and withholds no good thing from them that walk uprightly : therefore blessed are all they that put their trust in him ¹ [ver. 12].

And what remains now for us to do but to receive this conclusion of David as an absolute demonstration, and thereupon to walk uprightly, and to put our whole trust and confidence in God, through the merits of his Son Christ Jesus ; for then we are sure, we are in a sure way, of attaining to blessedness, to eternal blessedness ; that after this we may leave our wondering, yet continue our admiring : How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord God of Hosts !

¹ Ps. lxxxiv. 12 : "O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee."

Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, *bleſs* his holy name. 2. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: 3. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; 4. Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; 5. Who ſatisfieth thy mouth with good *things*; *ſo that* thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. 6. The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. 7. He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. 8. The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, ſlow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. 9. He will not always chide: neither will he keep *his anger* for ever. 10. He hath not dealt with us after our ſins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. 11. For as the heaven is high above the earth, *ſo* great is his mercy toward them that fear him. 12. As far as the eaſt is from the weſt, *ſo* far hath he removed our tranſgreſſions from us. 13. Like as a father pitieth *his* children, *ſo* the LORD pitieth them that fear him. 14. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that *we are* duſt. 15. *As for* man, his days *are* as graſs: as a flower of the field, ſo he flouriſheth. 16. For the wind paſſeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof ſhall know it no more. 17. But the mercy of the LORD *is* from everlaſting to everlaſting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; 18. To ſuch as keep his covenant, and to thoſe that remember his commandments to do them. 19. The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. 20. Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in ſtrength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. 21. Bless ye the LORD, all *ye* his hoſts; *ye* miniſters of his, that do his pleaſure. 22. Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bleſs the LORD, O my ſoul.—
PSALM ciii. (Auth. Ver.)

MEDITATIONS

UPON THE

HUNDRED AND THIRD PSALM OF DAVID.

BLESS the Lord, O my soul¹ [ver. 1]. Oh how well they are fitted! for what work so fit for my soul as this? Who so fit for this work as my soul? My body, God knows, is gross and heavy, and very unfit for so sublime a work. No, my soul, it is thou must do it; and, indeed, what hast thou else to do? it is the very work for which thou wert made; and oh that thou wert as fit to do the work as the work is fit for thee to do. But, alas, I fear that by coming into this body of earth, thou art become in a manner earthy, at least hast lost a great part of thy abilities, and wilt never be able to go through with this great work thyself alone. If to bless the Lord were no more but to say, Lord, Lord!² like to them that cried, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord!³ then my tongue alone would be sufficient for it, and I should not need to trouble any other about it; but to bless the Lord is an eminent work, and requires not only many but very able agents to perform it; and therefore, my soul, when thou goest about it, go not alone; but take with thee *all that is within me*,—all the forces in my whole magazine: whether it be my heart or my spirits, whether my will or my affections, whether my understanding or my memory, take them all with thee, and bless the Lord.

And of them all make use first of my memory: *Forget not all his benefits*⁴ [ver. 2], for to remember his benefits is

¹ Ps. ciii. 1: "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, *bless* his holy name." ² Matt. vii. 22. ³ Jer. vii. 4. ⁴ Ps. ciii. 2: "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

indeed a principal part of blessing him. And the sooner thou goest about it, the better thou art likely to perform it; for forgetfulness is a thing that grows soon upon us, and nothing sooner than forgetting of benefits. Our memories are very apt to retain injuries, but very unapt for retaining of benefits; for as long as we remember a benefit, we seem to stand upon the rack of an obligation to requite it. And who is not willing to come off a rack, by any means he can? and then rather by forgetting a benefit than by requiting it? and perhaps we think it a kind of payment if we can but forget we owe it. But, O my soul, consider that God expects no retaliation of us; he looks for no requiting at our hands. Alas! he knows we are not able. He takes it in good part if but only we remember his benefits; and should we not be most ungrateful, they being so great and so many as they are, if we should not afford him so much as the remembering them? But as to forget all his benefits were a wonderful forgetfulness, so to forget none at all were as wonderful a memory; for what memory can be so vast not to forget some when they be so many? indeed, so many that they cannot be numbered. And what then, O my soul, wilt thou do in this case? If thou canst not choose but forget some of his benefits, yet forget not all his benefits; if thou canst not remember all, at least remember some. Forget not it is he that *forgiveth all thy sins*; it is he that *healeth all thy infirmities*¹ [ver. 3]. Remember but these, and they will always minister matter enough to keep thee in work for blessing his name. For to forgive all my sins, O my grievous, my manifold sins, that I know not whether they be more or more grievous, whether their number or their greatness be the greater, is it not a benefit that may justly claim a prime place in my memory? If it were but only to be favourable in punishing my sins, it were a benefit worth remembering; but to blot my sins clean out, and absolutely to forgive them, and that freely, without any desert of mine,—alas, without any possibility of deserving, this is a benefit that no lethargy²

¹ Ps. ciii. 3: "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases."

² Lethargy, a disease caused by cold phlegmatic humours oppressing the brain, so that the person can do nothing but sleep. (Bailey's Dict.)

can forget, indeed a benefit that deserves remembering in the highest degree. And yet, perhaps, to forgive all my sins, not a greater benefit than to heal all my infirmities (this being the chief work of his grace, as that of his mercy), for seeing my sins, many of them, and upon the matter all of them, be sins of infirmity (for even wilfulness and presumption are of infirmity), by healing my infirmities he prevents me of sinning; and is it not as great a benefit to keep me from committing sins as to forgive my sins when I have committed them? But, O my soul, meddle not with this high point of heraldry, to discuss which is the greater of God's mercy or his grace. They are both an *abyssus* [a great deep]. It is work enough for thee, and for all that is within me, to bless him for both; and for both indeed thou hast just cause to bless him, seeing it is by the virtue of both that thou art able to bless him. If it were not for his mercy, thou wouldst want the material cause of blessing him; if it were not for his grace, the efficient; but now that there is a concurrence of both together, now that both he forgiveth all thy sins in his mercy, and healeth all thy infirmities by his grace, now, O my soul, what would it argue but extreme ungratefulness, far exceeding a forgetfulness both in thee and all that is within me, if thou shouldst not bless his name? For, O my soul, consider the multitude of infirmities to which thou art subject. Thou hast many suggestions of the flesh, and thou art apt to consent and yield unto them, and strivest not against them by earnest prayer and holy meditations: this is an infirmity.¹ In thy prayers to God, thy thoughts are often wandering, and thou thinkest of other matters far unworthy of that great majesty to whom thou prayest; or if not so, yet thou art quickly weary, thy spirits are drowsy in it, and thou hadst rather be doing of something else: this is an infirmity. And, indeed, thou hast infirmities in all thy senses. In thy seeing, thou canst see a mote in thy brother's eye, and canst not see a beam in thine own eye.² In thy smelling, thou thinkest, *Suavis odor lucri ex re qualibet*—that the savour of gain is sweet

¹ Ps. lxxvii. 10.² Matt. vii. 3.

from whencesoever it rise. In thy hearing, thou art gladder to hear profane and idle discourses than such as be serious and holy. These are infirmities; and, O my soul, if I should cut thee up into as many parts as an anatomist, and examine the infirmities of every part, should I not have cause, just cause, to cry out with St. Paul, O wretch that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin?¹ who shall heal me of all these infirmities? For whether we call them sins, and then God forgives them, or call them infirmities, and then he heals them, they are to us all one benefit; in God, all one kindness; that as either of them is well worth remembering, so for both of them we have just cause to bless him, and to praise his name.

But, O my soul, as thou rememberest these things, that both he forgiveth all thy sins and healeth all thy infirmities, so remember also their consequences too, for upon these there are great matters depending, as worthy to be remembered as the things themselves. For, alas, my soul, thou wert by sin come to be mortal, and the sentence of *Morte morieris* [dying thou shalt die]² was passed upon thee; but now, by forgiving thy sins, this sentence is reversed: by healing thy infirmities, *thy life is redeemed*³ [ver. 4]; it is taken out of the hands of the destroyer, and put into the hands of a Redeemer, and a Redeemer not only from captivity, but from destruction; for captivity takes away but only thy liberty, but destruction would take away thy very being; and can it be thou shouldst not keep that in memory which is itself the cause that thou hast a memory? for what memory couldst thou have if thou hadst not a being? and what being couldst thou have if thou wert destroyed? and destroyed thou shouldst be if thou wert not redeemed; and redeemed thou canst not be unless thy sins be forgiven. This, no doubt, is a consequence never to be forgotten; and yet perhaps there is a consequence behind of greater consequence than this; for this, my soul, gives thy life but only a duration, but there is a consequence a-coming that will give it an exaltation,

¹ Rom. vii. 24: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" ² Gen. ii. 17: "Thou shalt surely die," quoted from the Vulgate. ³ Ps. ciii. 4: "Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies."

for *He crowns thee with lovingkindness and with tender mercies*. To be made a king is an eminent favour, but to be made a king from being a captive, where not only the *quo* [the end] is so considerable, but the *unde* [the origin] more, this is indeed a supereminent favour, and hardly capable of expressing. And this is thy case, for where before thou hadst fetters upon thy feet, thou hast now a crown upon thy head, and not a crown gotten by violence and worn with fear, but He crowns thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies. His kindness would have made a crown good enough for thy wearing, but his lovingkindness makes it a crown worthy of his giving. And if there be doubt that his mercies alone may not be ready enough to bestow this crown upon thee, yet of the readiness of his tender mercies there can be no doubt; there can indeed be no doubt, seeing his lovingkindness and his tender mercies are the crown itself which he bestows. For, O my soul, when I speak of a crown, thou must not fancy to thyself such a crown as kings of the earth wear, for Christ professed plainly that his kingdom is not of this world,¹ and therefore neither must thine be; but consider the extent of God's lovingkindness and of his tender mercies, and thou wilt find a better crown laid up for thee² than all the kingdoms of the earth put together can afford. O gracious God, grant me the crown of thy lovingkindness and tender mercies, and all other crowns I willingly lay down at the foot of thy throne, with the four-and-twenty elders.³ This only is the crown to which my soul aspires, for only this crown makes sin and death to be my subjects—rebellious sin that can never be brought into subjection but only by this crown, O God, of thy lovingkindness and tender mercies. These indeed are consequences most worthy to be remembered, but yet perhaps not apt to be remembered, for are they not of too high a strain? and what the understanding doth not well apprehend, the memory doth not easily retain; he will therefore descend to benefits of a lower rank, *He satisfieth thy mouth with good things, and renews thy youth like the eagle's*⁴

¹ John xviii. 36. ² Tim. iv. 8. ³ Rev. iv. 10. ⁴ Ps. ciii. 5: "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."

[ver. 5]. This, no doubt, is apt to be remembered, because it falls within the compass of sense, for who is not sensible of good things, and specially when they be good things for the mouth? for all the labour of man is for the mouth;¹ all that the hands work for, and all that the feet toil about, is all but for the mouth; so long as we may have green pastures and still waters,² so long as we may have meat and drinks, not only to satisfy hunger, but to please the palate, we care not greatly for anything else. But, O my soul, these are not the good things that are here meant; and yet even this perhaps were worth the caring for if it might continue; but, alas, the days will come when I shall say, I have no pleasure in them;³ the time will come when my mouth will lose its taste, and what good then will these good things of the mouth do me? No, my soul, no fear here of old age; no fear of defect by reason of years, for thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle's; there shall be no loosening here of the silver cord, no breaking of the golden bowl,⁴ but as the eagle by mewing⁵ her feathers, renews her youth, so thou, my soul, by mewing thy feathers, which is by casting off this frail tabernacle of thy flesh,⁶ shalt perpetually be kept, by the powerful hand of God, in a state of vigour. Indeed the life we live now is the greatest part no life, for childhood is scarce come to it, and old age is almost past it, no time properly remaining to life but only the short time of youth; but the life that God hath in store for them that fear him, not only shall be always, but shall be always youth, and no defect of age shall be able to take hold upon it.

But may we not now begin anew, and conceive rather that when David calls upon his soul to bless the Lord, and not to forget all his benefits, he means he would have it to remember all his benefits; and therefore he presently falls to reckon them all up himself; not *singula generum*, but *genera singulorum*; not all in particular, but the general heads under which all the particulars are comprehended. And he begins with forgiveness of sins, because this is the foundation, this is that which reconciles us to God, and which makes us

Eccles. vi. 7. ¹ Ps. xxiii. 2. ² Eccles. xii. 1 ³ Eccles. xii. 6. ⁴ Mew,
to moult or cast the feathers. ⁵ 2 Cor. v. 1—4.

capable of all his other benefits. But, alas, what good will his forgiving my sins do me, if he stay there and go no further? for shall I not be committing of new sins continually, and so God shall be always forgiving, and never the nearer?—never the nearer, unless he be always forgiving. To help this, therefore, his next benefit is the healing all my infirmities; for this takes away that aptness to sin to which we are all of us by nature so prone and subject. But, alas, what good will both these benefits do me if he yet stay here, and go no further, seeing I am now a captive and already condemned to die the death? for should not my case be like to theirs who upon the scaffold ask the king forgiveness, and when he forgives them, yet they are put to death nevertheless. His next benefit therefore is a remedy for this; for He redeemeth thy life from destruction; he not only frees thee from captivity, but preserves thee from perishing. But, alas, what good yet will all these do me, if he should yet stay here, and go no further? for when my sins be forgiven, when my infirmities healed, when my life redeemed, yet what am I more by all this than as it were an *abrasa tabula* [a cleaned tablet] at most? what have I more to take joy in than every other ordinary creature? He will now therefore *coronidem imponere* [add a concluding flourish], give a benefit that shall perfect all; for He crowns thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; whatsoever is within the compass of his lovingkindness, whatsoever within the extent of his tender mercies, he will not only make thee capable of it, but will freely bestow it all upon thee. And who can deny but this now is a perfect inventory of all the benefits for which the soul hath cause to bless the Lord—to bless him in respect of itself? though there are other benefits indeed to the body for which the soul must bless him too; for, alas, the body is not able, not able of itself without the soul; and they are soon reckoned, for they may be reduced to these two, sustentation and renovation; for He satisfieth thy mouth with good things, and thy youth is renewed like the eagle's; as much as to say, Thou shalt have the happiness of the epicure¹ and

¹ A disciple of Epicurus, who placed the chief good, *summum bonum*, in happiness.

of the stoic,¹ both at once; at least, there shall be no fear of hunger and thirst, no drooping with age nor ruins of time.

And now, O my soul, let not my being in trouble, and oppressed with sorrows, make thee doubt of the truth of these things; for besides these benefits, *The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed* [ver. 6]; righteousness to them and judgment for them; for as it is righteous with God that his servants who are here oppressed should hereafter be comforted, and be made partakers of all these benefits,² so it is his judgment to the wicked, who are their oppressors, that they should feel hereafter the full measure of God's wrath, as it were in their revenge. And this righteousness and this judgment he not only deliberateth and determineth, he not only promiseth to the godly, and threatens to the wicked, and then leaves them undone, but he is perfect in all his ways, he is truly real, and puts them most assuredly in execution; at least, he executes them *per se* or *per alium* [by another], either by himself or by his angels, for indeed this part of his judgment, which is inflicting of punishment, is not properly in God *opus suum* [his own work], and therefore no marvel if he leave it to be done by angels, as he did at Sodom;³ but though the ministry be theirs, yet the execution is his; all the power is only from him.

And although the executing his righteousness and his judgment be *inter arcana sua* [among his secret things]—things hidden from us, at which we may stand amazed, but can never understand them, yet he hath oftentimes revealed them to his servants the prophets, and specially to his servant Moses; for *He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts to the children of Israel* [ver. 7]. For when Moses went up to the Mount Sinai, and tarried there with God the space of forty days,⁴ we may well think that God in that time revealed many secrets to him, and particularly made known his ways,—not only his ways in which he would have us to walk, but his ways in which he walks himself, and the course he holds in

¹ Stoics, followers of Zeno, who held that a wise man should be free from all passions, being moved by neither joy nor grief. ² 2 Cor. i. 7: "As ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation." ³ Gen. xix. 13. ⁴ Exod. xxiv. 18; xxxiv. 28.

the economy and government of worldly affairs ; why he suffers the wicked to prosper, and why the godly to be oppressed. These ways of his he made known to Moses ; to the children of Israel, only his acts. He showed them his wonders upon Pharaoh,¹ and that was his judgment ; and he showed them his wonderful favours to themselves in the wilderness, and that was his righteousness ; but he showed them not his way, and the course he held in them. They saw only the events of things ; they saw not the reasons of them, as Moses did ; no more do we ; nor is it fit we should. It is enough for us, enough for our comfort, that we know this of God in general, that *he is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and full of compassion*² [ver. 8]. Not that any slowness is in God, but his slowness is his patience, and his patience is out of compassion ; for, alas, if God were as ready to anger as we are ready to provoke him to anger, we ' had long ere this been turned to dust, and utterly consumed.

O my soul, here are four properties spoken of to be in God, and are all so necessary that we could not miss one of them ? If he were not merciful, we could hope for no pardon ; and if he were no more but merciful, we could hope for no more but pardon ; but when, besides his being merciful, he is also gracious, this gives us a further hope—a hope of a donative ; and then it will not be what we are worthy to receive, but what it is fit for him to give. If he were not slow to anger, we could expect no patience ; and if he were but only slow to anger, we could expect no more but patience ; but when, besides his slowness to anger, he is also full of compassion, this makes us expect he will be the good Samaritan, and not only bind up our wounds, but take care also for our further curing.³ What though he chide and be angry for a time : it is but our being patient awhile with him, as he a long time hath been patient with us : *For he will not be always chiding, neither will he keep his anger for ever* [ver. 9]. No, my soul, consider the rule of Nature, that *Nullum violentum est diuturnum* [Nothing violent is lasting], and you will find it true in

¹ Neh. ix. 10. ² Ps. ciii. 8 : "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy." ³ Luke x. 34, 35.

the God of Nature. Mercy and compassion are kindly and natural in God, and therefore these will continue, and never leave him; but chiding and anger are things, I may say, violent and not natural in him, and therefore it cannot be that these should last or continue long with him. Certainly it is as unpleasing to God to chide as it is to us to be chidden, and so little he likes of anger that he rids his hands of it as fast as he can; he is not so slow in coming to it but he is as quick in getting from it; for chiding is a bar to mercy, and anger an impediment to compassion; and nothing is so distasteful to God as that any block should lie in the way of his mercy, or that the liberty of his compassion should have any cause of restraint; and then, we may be sure, he will not himself lay a block in the way with chiding, nor be a cause to restrain his compassion by keeping his anger. And we may the better be persuaded of this, in that which is to come, for by taking notice of that which is past; *He hath not dealt with us after our sins, neither rewarded us according to our iniquities* [ver. 10]. Though he have chidden, yet he hath not stricken; or if he have stricken, yet his blows have not been great—not so great to do us any hurt; for there is mercy in his very anger; and though we keep ourselves within no bounds of sinning, yet he keeps his anger within the bounds of mercy. Alas, O Lord, if thou shouldst deal with me after my sins, as I have used no measure in my sinning, so thou shouldst use no measure in my punishing; and what, then, could I expect to befall me but utterly to perish?

But why is it that God hath not dealt with us after our sins? Is it not because he hath dealt with another after our sins?—another who took our sins upon him, of whom it is said that God chastened him in his fierce wrath;¹ and why did he chasten him but for our sins? O gracious God, thou art too just to take revenge twice for the same faults; and therefore, having turned thy fierce wrath upon him, thou wilt not turn it upon us too; but having rewarded him according to our iniquities, thou wilt now reward us according to his merits. O dear Jesus, let not thy painful sufferings

¹ Cf. Ps. lxxxviii. 16: "Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off."

be made frustrate by my sinful doings; but so mediate between God and my sins, that he may turn away his angry countenance from me, and look upon me only with the eye of his mercy. And, O my soul, how canst thou doubt of this, when *as high as the heaven is above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him*¹ [ver. 11]; and who would wish for a greater mercy to be in God than this? But yet the distance between earth and heaven, though great, and indeed very admirably great, is but a limited distance; and is there, then, a limitation and a boundary of God's mercy? May I not as truly say, As low as hell is beneath the earth, so great is my sin in the sight of God? And how, then, am I sure that God's mercy is any greater than my sins? and if not greater, how can it pardon them? O my soul, though the height of heaven be limited, yet God's mercy hath no limitation, for his mercy is above all his works,² and therefore above heaven, the work of his hands. Or if he seem to set a limitation to God's mercy, is it not perhaps because there is some sin that is not capable of his mercy? for sin against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven, either in this world or in the world to come.³ But, O my soul, though God's mercy be without limitation, yet let it not make thee the bolder to sin; for though it be so great, yet it is so great to none but to them that fear him, for to them that fear him not it is not so great; alas, it is not great at all; alas, it will be none at all. But if thou fear him (and to fear him is to fear to sin), then thy sin can never be so great but that God's mercy, which is as high as heaven, will bring thee to be admitted into the kingdom of heaven.

But if you think this distance of height from earth to heaven not sufficiently to express the greatness of God's mercy, then take the distance of length from east to west; for *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our sins from us*⁴ [ver. 12]; that if the east and the west can never come to meet together, no more shall our sins be ever

¹ Ps. ciii. 11: "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him." ² Ps. cxlv. 9: "His tender mercies are over all his works." ³ Matt. xii. 31, 32. ⁴ Ps. ciii. 12: "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."

able to come against us in the sight of God. But, alas, this gives not so good satisfaction as the other; for though the distance from east to west be vast indeed to us, as to which our sight cannot reach, though we should use all the perspective glasses of the world, yet what is this to God, who can as easily see from east to west as if they were hard by and close together? But is it not that all God's mercy to us is only in Christ? and may we not, then, conceive that these distances are represented by the manner of Christ's hanging upon the cross, where his feet and his head seem to point from earth to heaven, and the stretching out his hands seems to point from east to west? But though relation to Christ be not the ground of these expressions, yet it cannot be doubted but that they sufficiently express the greatness of God's mercy, seeing they are the greatest distances that human apprehension is capable to conceive.

But if you be not satisfied with these expressings from distances of place, then take an expressing from the affection of nature: *For as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him*¹ [ver. 13]. And now let any that is a father examine his own bowels how much he pities his children, and then say if God's pity to them that fear him be not in a very high degree. Certainly if any name could express a greater pity than the name of a father, Christ would never have taught us to use this name in making our prayers.² And who could be so fit to make this comparison as David, who gave a testimony of it in himself by making his moan: O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom; would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son;³ that now it seems God's pity is matched, and this example reacheth home to express the greatness of God's pity to the full. No, my soul, it is too short yet; for though the pity of a father may reach to be willing to die for his child, yet God's pity reacheth further; not only to be willing to die, but to die indeed; and not only for a child, but for his enemies; for when we were enemies, even then did Christ, very God, die for us;⁴ that God's pity holds the supremacy still, and cannot

¹ Ps. ciii. 13: "Like as a father pitieth *his* children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him." Matt. vi. 9. ² a Sam. xviii. 33. ³ Rom. v. 10.

indeed be matched : alas, it cannot be expressed by anything that is in man.

But though there may be comparison in the tenderness of their pities, yet in the ability there can be none ; for a father pities oftentimes a child, when he cannot help him ; but God's pity is always active and powerful, and never without relieving ; that though it be commonly said, It is better to be envied than pitied ; yet here it is not so ; but it is a far happier thing to be pitied of God than to be envied of men.

But whom is it that God pities ?—only them that fear him ; and, indeed, fear is a thing that deserves to be pitied, for it makes the joints to tremble, and puts the spirits in amazement. But, O, my soul, it is not such a fear that is here meant ; but this fear is all one, I may say, with love, and differs but in the object ; for looking upon God's justice we fear him, and looking upon his mercy we love him, although we love him for his justice too, and we fear him for his mercy too ; for as there is mercy with him that he may be feared,¹ so there is justice with him that he may be loved.

But why is it that God pities them that fear him ? Indeed he hath cause enough to pity them ; for *he considers of what we are framed ; he remembers that we are but dust*² [ver. 14]. And, alas, what is there in dust to help itself, if God in mercy take not pity upon it ? When God looks down upon us, and sees how foul we are grown, whom he created clean, hath he not cause to fall a-chiding, and to be angry ? yet when he considers of what we are framed, and that we are but dust, this is some cause, again, to make him leave his chiding, and not to keep his anger for ever ; that we may truly say, Our miseries are our happiness ; for if it be our misery that we are framed of so mean a matter as dust, it is our happiness that we have the meanness of our matter for God to take into his consideration ; and perhaps this was it, at least one circumstance, that made so ill for the angels that fell,³ that God could find no excuse of their sin in their

¹ Ps. cxxx. 4 : " But *there is* forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared."

² Ps. ciii. 14 : " For he knoweth our frame ; he remembereth that we *are* dust."

³ Jude 6.

matter : the more he considered of what they were framed, the more he found he had cause to be angry ; and therefore no marvel if his anger to them continue for ever.

But this is every one's case to be framed of dust, and why then should God pity some more than others, seeing they be equally of dust, all ? Is it not that he is the less angry, indeed, for that they are but dust ; but yet he pities them not for being dust, but for being dust and fearing him ? for if they fear him not, he never pities them, but lets them go on in their pride, at least in their security, and make what they can of their dust ; for they reckon upon great matters from their dust, and think they can improve it to a great height ; but, alas, what can they make of it but to come *to be grass*¹ [ver. 15], at most to get up to be a flower, a poor fading thing, that whether you gather it, or let it grow, whether the sun shine upon it, or the *wind blow upon it, it quickly withers*² [ver. 16], and, once withered, becomes a pitiful sight to be seen, a loathsome thing to be smelt,—that where all the grace of it consisted in the two senses of sight and smelling, it is now offensive to both, and is no longer carried in the hand or worn in the bosom ? Alas, it is scarce thought worthy to have a place upon the dunghill. And, indeed, what could more be looked for of dust, being so light a thing as it is, that if the wind but pass over it, if you but blow upon it, it is presently scattered and gone, and the place where it was, will know it no more ? And such is man : his flourishing is but as a flower, as quickly withered as a flower, and as soon cropped off from his stalk as a flower ; and, alas, what good is in a flourishing that ends in a withering ? what happiness in pleasures that have no continuance ? O my soul, if thou wert thyself a transitory thing, and wert not to continue, thou mightst justly then look after transitory pleasures, and such as have no continuance ; but seeing thou art a substance perpetual and immortal, oh therefore look after pleasures like thyself, pleasures that may last, and never come

¹ Ps. ciii. 15 : "*As for man, his days are as grass : as a flower of the field so he flourisheth.*" ² Ps. ciii. 16 : "*For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone ; and the place thereof shall know it no more.*"

to the last, that may last and be durable, and not leave thee to the misery of *Fuit Ilium, et ingens gloria teucrorum* [Troy has had its day, and the vast glory of the Trojans]; for *Fuisse felicem miserrimum est* [It is sad indeed to have been happy],—to have been happy, and not to be, to have flourished, and now to be withered, is the greatest misery in the world; and the greater, for that once plucked off from his stalk, once taken from the earth, the earth will never know him any more: alas, it will scarce take notice that ever such a one there was; and the notice it takes [will be] but *in specie* [in a general way]; neither, not *in individuo* [personally]; some, perhaps, as of a man; none, as of this man; or rather, some as of a name; none, as of a man. Or is it rather that man, turned once to dust, his place will know him no more, for how should it know one from another when they are all so like? How know Dives from Lazarus, when they have both the same face, seeing Death hath but one copy to draw all her pictures by. Or is it rather that man once turned to dust, is blown about with every wind from place to place; and what knows the place, when dust falls upon it, whether it be the dust of a prince or of a peasant, whether of a man or of a beast? And must not man then be needs very miserable, when time and place, the two best helps of life, do both forsake him? for what help can he have of time, when his days are but as grass? what help of place, when his place denies him, and will not know him? But oh how vain a thing is man, to forget not only the very matter of which he is made, but the very condition under which he is made; and so to forget it, that God must be fain to remember him of it; but much the vainer, that being remembered of it never so often, yet he regards it never the more, but contenting himself to be fading grass, at most a fading flower, never seeks to improve his dust to that true solidness which nothing but the fear of God is able to procure, nothing but the pity in God is able to effect.

But now at last, if neither the distances of place nor the affection of nature can make you sufficiently conceive the greatness of God's mercy, then take an expressing in plain

terms, and this will certainly make you conceive it; for *his mercy is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him*¹ [ver. 17]. It is from everlasting, for it began to be before the foundations of the world were laid; and it is to everlasting, for it will continue to be when the frame of the world shall be dissolved; that now, O my soul, there can be no fear of the greatness of God's mercy: all the fear now is of thine own fear; for although God's mercy be so everlasting, yet it is so but to them that fear him; for if thou *fear him not, and keep not his commandments*² [ver. 18], then his mercy to thee is neither from everlasting nor to everlasting; but if thou fear him, and keep his commandments, then his mercy to thee is both; and not only to thee, as though God's mercy were only a personal benefit, and should end with thyself, but it shall be continued to thy children's children, *et natis natorum, et qui nascentur ab illis* [and to children's children, and to those that are born of them], to thy whole posterity. O my soul, what an inheritance is this to purchase to our children! at least, if it be not an absolute inheritance, yet it is so sure an entail, that nothing but the want of fearing God can cut it off.

And, indeed, why else hath God *prepared his throne in heaven*³ [ver. 19], but to the end the godly may be assured that, though they be now oppressed on earth, yet thither they shall come at last to be with him in joy—to be there in joy for having obeyed him, when the wicked shall be left behind to bewail their miseries for not obeying him. For though his throne be prepared only in heaven, *yet his kingdom ruleth over all*,—over all, both man and beast, both the godly and the wicked, both blessed angels and damned spirits; and because his kingdom ruleth over all, therefore all shall serve him, and shall serve him indeed with fear; yet there shall be a difference, for the godly shall serve him

¹ Ps. ciii. 17: "But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children." ² Ps. ciii. 18: "To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them." ³ Ps. ciii. 19: The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all."

with fear and joy, where the wicked shall serve him with fear and trembling.¹

And now, seeing God hath prepared his throne in heaven, therefore, O *ye his angels*² [ver. 20], inhabitants of heaven, that obey his commandments by the freedom of your will, do you begin first, and praise his name, for you excel in strength, and are best able to do it. And seeing his kingdom ruleth over all, therefore, *all ye his hosts*³ [ver. 21], his other creatures that obey his commandments too, though not by will, yet by instinct, do you second the angels in praising his name. And then thou, *my soul*⁴ [ver. 22], that partakest of both the natures, *do thou also, and with thee also the souls of all the godly, join with them in his praises*, that so at least there may be a concert of three to bless and praise him who is a Trinity in unity, three persons and one God, to be blessed and praised for ever and ever. But to be blessed and praised as by all the persons of his kingdom, so in all the places of his dominion, which are heaven, and earth, and hell—a triplicity, too, for even hell is a place within his dominion. And for praising him in heaven, the angels will be sure enough to look to that; and for praising him in hell, let the wicked and the damned spirits look to that at their peril; but for praising him on earth, thou, my soul, and the souls of all the godly, will undertake to do that—at least, will pray continually to him that sitteth upon the throne to be enabled to do it; and when all these shall fail, or lest they should fail, when heaven and earth shall pass away, when time and place shall be no more, yet his praise shall be continued still by his own works, which are his glory and his power, his infiniteness and his eternity; but above all, which is above all his works, the works of his infinite and everlasting mercy.

¹ Ps. ii. 12. ² Ps. ciii. 20: "Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word." ³ Ps. ciii. 21:

"Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure."

⁴ Ps. ciii. 22: "Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul."

I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice *and* my supplications. 2. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon *him* as long as I live. 3. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. 4. Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul. 5. Gracious *is* the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God *is* merciful. 6. The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me. 7. Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee. 8. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, *and* my feet from falling. 9. I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living. 10. I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted: 11. I said in my haste, All men *are* liars. 12. What shall I render unto the LORD *for* all his benefits toward me? 13. I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. 14. I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people. 15. Precious in the sight of the LORD *is* the death of his saints. 16. O LORD, truly I *am* thy servant; I *am* thy servant, *and* the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds. 17. I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD. 18. I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people. 19. In the courts of the LORD's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.—PSALM cxvi. (Auth. Ver.)

MEDITATIONS

UPON THE

HUNDRED AND SIXTEENTH PSALM.

BUT how can David say so peremptorily, I will love the Lord ¹ [ver. 1], as though it were in his own power to love whom he list? Indeed, nothing is so voluntary as love, that it seems to be the extremity of the will, for then we are said to love a thing when the will is inclined and violently bent upon it; and yet, I know not how, there seems nothing more constrained than love, for we oftentimes love a thing which we would fain we could forbear to love, but that we are drawn to love it by a kind of violence in the object; and therefore David may well say, I will love the Lord, seeing both the causes of love are here met—a propension ² in the will, and an excellency in the object.

Man, indeed, is naturally a loving creature, but doth not always place his love aright; his love is then best placed when it is placed upon the best object, and what is that best object but God? If he place it upon beauty, that fadeth; if upon riches, they perish; if upon honour, that vanisheth; if upon life, that wasteth: but all these are in God, not only in eminency, but in continuance. In him is beauty that never fadeth; in him riches that never perish; in him honour that never vanisheth; in him life that never wasteth; and therefore as the truest object of love, as the dearest object of my love, I will love the Lord.

¹ Ps. cxvi. 1: "I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice *and* my supplications." ² Inclination, readiness, proneness.

But though all these eminences be in God, yet they would be no cause for man to love him if they had not a relation to man ; for what cause of love where there can be expected no effects of love ? But seeing there is in them not only a relation, but a propension—not only they are ready to be imparted, but are imparted with readiness, what man is he that will forbear to say, that can forbear to say, I love the Lord ? And if all men will forbear to say it, yet I will say it ; for He hath heard my voice and my supplication,—no doubt a just cause, or rather indeed, to a natural man, the only cause for loving of God. For of fearing him, of praising him, of worshipping him, of magnifying him, there are other causes ; but of loving him, no cause so proper as his loving of us,¹ and the benefits which he bestows upon us ; for love is so reciprocal a thing, that we should hardly love God himself but for his love to us—at least, for our opinion of his love to us ; and we should hardly have an opinion of his love, if we had not a feeling of his benefits ; for what love can we think is borne us by them that are able to do us good and do it not ? But when we have a feeling of their benefits, and find they do us good, then we are easily persuaded of their love ; and being so persuaded, who can choose but say, as David doth here, I love the Lord, for he hath heard my voice and my supplication ?

But do we love God but for his benefits only ? and if it were not for his benefits, should we not love him ? Indeed, to love God as we ought, is not to love him for aught, but for himself only, without any consideration had at all of his benefits ; but such lovers we are of our own good, that we should scarce love ourselves but for the good we are ready to do ourselves ; and if we love God in the like degree, we think it, perhaps, to be love enough for him. But, O my soul, this is just the devil's love,—I mean such love as the devil thought to be in Job : Doth Job love God for nought ?² He hoped he did not, though he knew he should, and therefore was never in quiet till it might be tried ; and if he had found it so, he would quickly have made Job leave loving of

¹ 1 John iv. 19.² Job i. 9.

God, and fall to loving of him. But the hedge which God had set about Job¹ was not a hedge of prosperity, as Satan supposed, but a hedge of grace; and therefore, with all his fiery trials, he could never get other words from Job but such as these: Shall we receive good at God's hands, and shall we not receive evil?² Yes, O Lord, though thou kill me, yet will I love thee.³ Thus Job did, and thus should we do; but God knows there is not such a man again as Job was upon the face of the earth.⁴ For, alas, we are commonly but of the classes or form of which St. John speaks: We love God because God loved us first;⁵ and it were well if we would do but so, how much soever Satan slights it and seeks to disgrace it. Or is it, perhaps, that David speaks in the curiosity of this distinction, that we do not *amare Deum* [love God from feeling], but for his benefits; but we may *diligere Deum* [love God with reverence], without any consideration of his benefits had at all; and in this sense a natural man may *amare Deum*, but none but the spiritual man *diligere Deum*. But, O my soul, do thou endeavour to be of Job's form, to love God without distinction; and whether he hear thy voice or hear it not, whether he grant thy supplication or grant it not, yet to love him, and to love with *amando* and with *diligendo* [with affection and with reverence], and with any another devotion of love that can be expressed or conceived. For it is, indeed, no true love of God if we love him for anything but for himself, if we love ourselves but only for him, as it seems both Moses⁶ and St. Paul⁷ did, who for the love of God left all care of themselves, and were contented to have been (if they might have been) even *anathemas* [cursed].

But is this such a benefit to us that God hears us? Is his hearing our voice such an argument of his love? Alas! he may hear us, and we never the better: he may hear our voice, and yet his love to us perhaps but little, for who will not give a man the hearing though he love him not at all? With men perhaps it may be so, but not with God, for his

¹ Job i. 20. ² Job ii. 10. ³ Job xiii. 15: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."
⁴ Job i. 8. ⁵ 1 John iv. 19. ⁶ Exod. xxxii. 32: "Yet now if thou wilt forgive their sin . . . ; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book."
⁷ Rom. ix. 3: "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren."

hearing is not only voluntary, but reserved; *non omnibus dormit* [he does not sleep for every one's advantage];¹ his ears are not open to every one's cry; indeed to hear us is in God so great a favour that he may well be counted his favourite whom he vouchsafes to hear; and the rather for that his hearing is always operative and with a purpose of helping, that if he hear my voice I may be sure he means to grant my supplication, or rather, perhaps, in David's manner of expressing, in God's manner of proceeding, to hear my voice is no less in effect than to grant my supplication.

And now *because he hath inclined his ear to hear me, I will therefore call upon him as long as I live*² [ver. 2], that if it be expected I should call upon any other, it must be when I am dead, for as long as I live I have vowed to call upon God. But will this be well done? May I not in so doing do more than I shall have thanks for perhaps for my labour? Is this the requital that God shall have for his kindness in hearing me, that now he shall have a customer of me, and never be in quiet for my continual running to him and calling upon him? Doth God get anything by my calling upon him that I should make it a vow, as though in calling upon him, I did him a pleasure? O my soul, that God might indeed have a customer of me in praying, although I confess I should not be so bold to call upon him so continually if his own commanding me did not make it a duty, for hath not God bid me call upon him when I am in trouble?³ and is there any time that I am not in trouble as long as I live in this vale of misery? and then can there be any time as long as I live that I must not call upon him? For shall God bid me, and shall I not do it? shall God incline his ear, and stand listening to hear, and shall I hold my peace for the nonce that he may have nothing to hear? or shall I waive calling upon God, who I know both can and will hear me, and call upon some other who I know not whether they can or no? Is prayer worth anything if it be not in faith? and can there be faith where there is uncertainty? O my soul, this is a great secret, which we

¹ A strangely inappropriate quotation. ² Ps. cxvi. 2: "Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live." ³ Ps. l. 15.

should perhaps have never known if God himself had not revealed it to us, that to call upon him is not a trouble to him, but a pleasure; not in us a presumption, but a duty; though it be our suit, yet it is his service: it is indeed both our suit and service; and though his glory be not the more by it, yet his glory is the more manifested by it; and as he is a jealous God,¹ so of nothing so much as of his glory,—his glory he will not communicate with any other;² anything else perhaps, but not his glory; and this is all the glory he can have from us, that we acknowledge our own weakness, and his power; that we call upon him, not only as one that is able to help us, but as the only one that is able to help us, for else we satisfy not his jealousy; and if it be a true rule in philosophy, *Frustra fit per plura, quod fieri potest per pauciora* [That is vainly done by many means that can be effected by few]; it is no less true in divinity: it is in vain to call upon any other for relief but God alone, if God alone be able and willing to relieve us. Either, therefore, we must say that God is not able or not willing to help us; or else confess it at least a great vanity to call for help to any other.

But if God's benefits be the motive to love him, why are not his afflictions as well a motive not to love him? For is there any evil in the city, and God hath not done it?³ No, my soul, the reason is not like; his benefits are all gratuitous, and come gratis from him; his afflictions are, as it were, violent, and come forcibly from him; his afflictions are punishments or chastisements duly deserved; but his benefits are not wages or rewards that are justly merited, and therefore we cannot so justly say that crosses and afflictions are cast upon us by God, as that they are drawn upon us by our own sin; for sorrows and pains are as the echoes, I may say, of sin; and according as this calls, so they answer: if sins be but light, there is like to be heard but a light reflex of sorrows; but if they be crying sins, heinous and loud, what marvel if the echoes be answerable, and that the sorrows of death compass us about, and the pains of hell take hold upon us⁴ [ver. 3].

¹ Exod. xx. 5. ² Isa. xlii. 8, xlviii. 11. ³ Amos iii. 6. ⁴ Ps. cxvi. 3: "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow."

But if it be doubted by what means afflictions and crosses do happen to us, yet it cannot be doubted by what means they must be removed from us, seeing there is none able to roll away the grave-stone of our sins but only God;¹ and therefore no means to remove afflictions but only his mercy; and no means of this means but to call upon him. Do physicians use to come to a patient unless they be called? and why then should we look that God, the great Physician of our souls, should come to help us if we call not upon him? upon him, O my soul, and upon no other; for of his power and will to help me I cannot doubt; of others I may; for the sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell took hold upon me; and can I doubt of his power that hath delivered me from these? or can I think of any other that could deliver me from these, but only he? Could any deliver me from the sorrows of death but he only who triumphed over death?² Could any free me from the pains of hell, but he only who put hell itself to pain, and cast death and hell into the lake of fire?³ and shall I call upon any other to deliver me, but upon him only who I am well assured is able to deliver me? No, my soul, but to leave no time for calling upon any other; *I will call upon God as long as I live*,—not for a day, or a month, but all the days of my life, even as long as I live. And how long will that be? Alas! how long can it be, seeing the sorrows of death have already compassed me about, and the pains of hell have taken hold upon me? For what are the sorrows of death but sorrows like those of Rachel,⁴ that would not be comforted because they were not? What are the pains of hell but pains caused by guiltiness of sin that deserves hell,—pains not more in sense of torment than despair of remedy? What is it for the sorrows of death to compass me about but as it were to besiege me? and was it ever known, where they once besieged, that ever they did raise their siege? Was it ever known, where the pains of hell did once take hold, that ever they did let go their hold? and, alas, in this extremity of distress, in this gulf of despair, what hope could David pos-

¹ Mark xvi. 3. ² 2 Tim. i. 10. ³ Rev. xx. 14. ⁴ Jer. xxxi. 25; Matt. ii. 18.

sibly have that ever he should be delivered? O my soul, the hope of Abraham; *in spe contra spem credidit* [against hope he believed in hope].¹ He believed against all credibility, he hoped against all possibility,—against all possibility indeed in the course of nature, against all credibility in the eye of reason; and therefore he makes his moan to one above the reach both of nature and reason: *O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul*² [ver. 4]; a short prayer for so great a suit: and yet as short as it was it prevailed; that if we wondered before at the power of God, we may wonder now at the power of prayer, that can prevail with God for obtaining of that which in nature is impossible, and to reason seems incredible.

There are many short prayers recorded in the scriptures, of which we may note especially three: this of David here, O Lord, deliver my soul; and that of the publican in the gospel, Lord, be merciful to me a sinner;³ and that of the thief upon the cross, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom,⁴—all three short, yet all three prevalent, that we may know it is not the multiplicity of words or the length of prayers that prevails with God, but the fervency of spirit and the devotion of the heart. Yet lest it should be taken as a restraint of longer prayers, and especially lest it should be a scandal to the prayer which Christ taught us, and is much longer, we may observe withal that each of these prayers is but of one petition in Christ's prayer; for to say, O Lord, deliver my soul, is no more, nor fully so much, as to say, Deliver us from evil; and to say, Lord, be merciful to me a sinner, is no more, nor fully so much, as to say, Forgive us our trespasses; and to say, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom, is no more, nor so much, as to say, Thy kingdom come.⁵

But seeing David with his short prayer prevailed with God to deliver his soul, why should I despair of the like success of my prayers to be delivered from my troubles? O my soul, I should not despair of the like success as David had, if I could but pray with the like spirit as David did;

¹ Rom. iv. 18. ² Ps. cxvi. 4: "Then called I upon the name of the LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul." ³ Luke xviii. 13: "God be merciful to me a sinner." ⁴ L. xxiii. 42. ⁵ Matt. vi. 9-13.

oh therefore, thou great God, that didst inspire David's heart with a spirit of zeal, which made his prayers not only acceptable, but effectual, vouchsafe also to kindle in my heart a fire of devotion, that my prayers may ascend unto thee like the sacrifice of Abel;¹ so acceptable, that they may be accepted; so accepted, that they may be effectual, and may make me to sing this alleluia of David, I will love the Lord, for he hath heard my voice and my supplication.

And now, O my soul, methinks I see the Lord as it were inclining his ear unto me; and I seem to feel an access of force in my confidence of his goodness, for indeed *the LORD is gracious and righteous; yea, our God is merciful*² [ver. 5]. He is gracious in hearing, he is righteous in judging, he is merciful in pardoning; and how then can I doubt of his will to help me? He is righteous to reward according to deserts; he is gracious to reward above deserts; yea, he is merciful to reward without deserts; and how then can I doubt of his will to help me? He is gracious, and this shows his bounty; he is righteous, and this shows his justice; yea, he is merciful, and this shows his love; and how then can I doubt of his will to help me? If he were not gracious, I could not hope he would hear me; if he were not righteous, I could not depend upon his promise; if he were not merciful, I could not expect his pardon; but now that he is gracious, and righteous,—yea, and merciful too, how can I doubt of his will to help me?

But are there no others that are gracious, and righteous, and merciful, as well as he? Are not the saints and angels in heaven? They are so, no doubt, but not as well as he: God forbid we should once have such a thought; they are gracious, and righteous, and merciful by participation only; and only by having, as it were, some beams imparted to them; but to be gracious as the Fountain of grace,³ to be righteous as the Sun of righteousness,⁴ to be merciful as the Author of mercy,⁵ there is none, there is none at all, neither saint nor angel, that is so, but only God; and there-

¹ Gen. iv. 4. ² Ps. cxvi. 5: "Gracious is the Lord and righteous; yea, our God is merciful."
³ Jer. ii. 13, xvii. 13: "Fountain of living waters."
⁴ Mal. iv. 2.
⁵ Heb. v. 9: "Author of eternal salvation."

fore of God's power and will to help me—of his, and of his only—I can only be assured. And if I err in simplicity, yet *the LORD preserveth the simple*¹ [ver. 6]; he takes not advantage of errors, where there is a good intention; yet not a good intention only where the truth is manifest and revealed, for then should Uzzah² have been preserved; but in matters obscure, and not plainly revealed, there to serve God in simplicity of heart, this falls within the compass of God's mercy, and such he takes into his protection. He gives them perhaps some resentment of their errors by worldly crosses, but yet he denies them not his assistance; and this I can speak of my own experience, for I was brought low, and yet he helped me: I was brought low, and in trouble, by the just provocation of my sins; but because I sinned not in presumption, but in simplicity, at least by infirmity, the Lord hath had mercy on me and preserved me. Or, *I was brought low, and he helped me*; for then is the time of help, when we are brought low; and therefore God, who doth all things in due time, when I was brought low, then he helped me. Wherefore, O my soul, let it never trouble thee how low soever thou be brought; for when thy state is at the lowest, then is God's assistance at the nearest, that we may truly say, God's ways are not as the ways of the world;³ for in the world, when a man is brought low, he is commonly trampled upon; and nothing is heard then but Down with him, down to the ground; but with God it is otherwise, for his property is to raise up them that fall, and when they are brought low, then to help them.⁴ That it is no such hard case for a man to be brought low, may I not rather say his case is happy? for is it not better to be brought low, and have God to help him, than to be set aloft, and left to help himself? At least, O my body, this may be a comfort to thee; for thou art sure to be brought low, as low as the grave, which is low indeed; yet there thou mayest rest in hope,⁵ for even there the Lord will not leave to help thee.

Or is it that he was brought low, was humbled in spirit, to

¹ Ps. cxvi. 6: "The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me." ² Sam. vi. 6, 7. ³ Isa. lv. 8. ⁴ Ps. cxlv. 14: "The LORD upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down." ⁵ Ps. xvi. 9.

seem vile in his own eyes, and then God helped him? For God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.¹

Now therefore, *O my soul, return to thy rest, for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee* [ver. 7]. Now, my soul, let it be no longer said, Why art thou so heavy, and why art thou disquieted within me? for the Lord hath exceeded the bounds of mercifulness with his bountifulness: not only in mercy he hath forgiven my sins, but as if my sins had been merits, he hath made me also to taste of his bounty. He hath dealt indeed most bountifully with thee, for where thou didst make suit but for one thing, he hath granted thee three. Thou didst ask to have my soul delivered, and he hath delivered mine eyes and my feet besides⁴ [ver. 8], and with a deliverance in each of them the greatest that could be, for what greater deliverance to my soul than to be delivered from death? What greater deliverance to mine eyes than to be delivered from tears? What to my feet than to be delivered from falling? that if now, O my soul, thou return not to thy rest, thou wilt show thyself to be most insatiable, seeing thou hast not only more than thou didst ask, but as much indeed as was possible to be asked.

But can my soul die? and if not, what bounty is it then to deliver my soul from that to which it is not subject? The soul indeed, though immortal, hath yet her ways of dying. It is one kind of death to the soul to be parted from the body, but the truest kind is to be parted from God; and from both these kinds of death he hath delivered my soul: from the first, by delivering me from a dangerous sickness that threatened a dissolution of my soul and body; from the other, by delivering me from the guilt of sin that threatened a separation from the favour of God; and are not these bounties to give my soul just cause of returning to her rest? It is true, it is the imperfection of life that is subject to sickness, and sickness draws mortality after it; but this imperfection is not here, for *he hath delivered my soul from*

¹ Jas. iv. 6. ² Ps. cxvi. 7: "Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee." ³ Ps. xlii. 5, 11, xliii. 5: "Why art thou cast down," etc. ⁴ Ps. cxvi. 8: "For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling."

death, and what is this but to have perfect health? yet it is the imperfection of health that it is subject to crosses, and crosses are the cause of tears; but neither hath this imperfection any place here, for *he hath delivered mine eyes from tears*; and what is this but to have perfect joy? yet it is the imperfection of joy that it useth not to continue, as it is said of the prosperity of the wicked, They are set in slippery places,¹ and are apt to fall; but neither is this imperfection found here, for *he hath delivered my feet from falling*; and what is this but to be assured of continuance? If then thou hast such health, such joy, such stability,—health not subject to sickness, joy not capable of sorrow, stability not obnoxious to falling,—how canst thou, O my soul, how canst thou choose but pacify thy unquietness, and return to thy rest? But, alas, the rest thou canst return to now is but a type of that true rest when thou shalt rest from thy labours, and when thy works that now go with thee shall then follow thee.² Thou hast now but one day of rest for six days of labour,³ but then thou shalt have an eternal Sabbath,⁴ without any days of labour to disquiet it.

But though this rest cannot now be had whilst thou dwellest in a restless body, and thy body in a restless world, yet there is a rest that is worth the having, and may only, my soul, be called thy rest,—the rest which consists in the peace of conscience; and to this rest thou mayest well return, seeing not only thou art at peace with God, as being justified by his grace, but thou art in his favour also, as having dealt so bountifully with thee. And when thou returnest to this rest, to the end thou mayest have some exercise to thy rest, that thy resting make thee not restive, *I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living* [ver. 9]. For now that my feet are delivered from falling, how can I better employ them than in walking? Were they delivered from falling, to the end they should stand still and be idle? No, my soul, but to encourage me to walk; and where is so good walking as in the land of the living? Alas! what walking is it in the

¹ Ps. lxxiii. 18. ² Rev. xiv. 13. ³ Exod. xx. 9; Deut. v. 13. ⁴ Heb. iv. 9: "There remaineth therefore a rest (Gr. *σάββατον*, a keeping of Sabbath) to the people of God."

winter, when all things seem dead, when the very grass lies buried under ground, and scarce anything that hath life in it to be seen? but then is the pleasant walking when Nature spreads her green carpet to walk upon; and then it is a land of the living, when the trees show they live by bringing forth, if not fruits, at least leaves; when the valleys show they live by bringing forth, if not sweet flowers to delight the smell, at least fresh grass to please the eyes. But is this the walking in the land of the living that David means? O my soul, to walk in the land of the living is to walk in the paths of righteousness,¹ for there is no such death to the soul as sin; no such cause of tears to the eyes as guiltiness of conscience; no such falling of the feet as to fall from God; and therefore, to say the truth, the soul can never return to its rest if we walk not withal in the paths of righteousness; and we cannot well say whether this rest be a cause of the walk, or the walking be a cause of the resting; but this we may say, they are certainly companions one to the other, which is in effect but this, that justification can never be without sanctification; peace of conscience, and godliness of life, can never be one without the other. Or is it, perhaps, that David means that land of the living where Enoch² and Elijah³ are living with the living God? But if he mean so, how can he speak so confidently, and say, I will walk in the land of the living, as though he could come to walk there by his own strength or at his own pleasure? He therefore gives his reason: *I believed, and therefore I spake*⁴ [ver. 10], for the voice of faith is strong, and speaks with confidence; and because in faith he believed that he shall come to walk in the land of the living, therefore with confidence he speaks it: I will walk in the land of the living; and perhaps to signify that he shall not walk there against his will, but that he endeavours and useth the best means he can that he may walk there. For indeed if we endeavour not to walk here, with Enoch and Elijah, in the paths of righteousness, we shall never come to walk with God in the land of the living.

¹ Ps. xxiii. 3. ² Heb. xi. 5; Gen. v. 24. ³ 2 Kings ii. 11. ⁴ Ps. cxvi. 10:
 "I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted."

But though I had spoken thus, and thus confidently, yet I found myself in trouble and affliction still, which made me *say in my haste, All men are liars* ¹ [ver. 11]. In my haste indeed, for I thought not of one man who was far from being a liar, and in whose mouth was found no guile.²

It seems that to give the lie was not so heinous an offence in David's time as it is in these days, for else how durst he have spoken such words that all men are liars, which is no less than to give the lie to the whole world? And yet no man, I think, will challenge him for saying so, no more than challenge St. John for saying that all men are sinners.³ And indeed how should any man avoid being a liar, seeing the very being man is itself a lie; not only a vanity, and put in the balance is less than vanity, but a very lie, promising great matters, and is able to do just nothing; as Christ saith, Without me ye can do nothing;⁴ and so Christ seems to come in, as it were, to be David's second, and to make his word good, that all men be liars. And now let the world do its worst, and take the lie how it will; for David, having Christ on his side, will always be able to make his part good against all the world, for Christ hath overcome the world.⁵

But though all men may be said to be liars, yet not all men in all things, for then David himself should be a liar in this: but all men perhaps in something or other, at some time or other, in some kind or other; absolute truth not found in any man, but in that man only who was not man only, for if he had been but so it had not perhaps been found in him neither, seeing absolute truth and deity are as relatives never found to be asunder.

But in what thing is it that all men should be liars? Indeed, in this, for one, to think that God regards not nor loves not them whom he suffers to be afflicted; for we may rather think he loves them most whom he suffers to be most afflicted; and we may truly say, he would never

¹ Ps. cxvi. 11: "I said in my haste, All men are liars." * 1 Pet. ii. 22: "Neither was guile found in his mouth." Cf. Ps. xxxii. 2. * 1 John v. 19: "The whole world lieth in wickedness." Rom. iii. 23: "All men have sinned." * John xv. 5. * John xvi. 33.

have suffered his servant Job to be afflicted so exceeding cruelly if he had not loved him exceeding tenderly;¹ for there is nothing lost by suffering afflictions; no, my soul, they do but serve to make up the greater weight of glory,² when it shall be revealed.

But let his afflictions be what they can be, yet I will always acknowledge they can never be in any degree so great as his benefits; and oh that I could think of something that I might *render to him for all his benefits*³ [ver. 12]; for shall I receive so great, so infinite benefits from him, and shall I render nothing to him by way of gratefulness? But, alas, what have I to render? all my rendering to him will be but taking more from him, for all I can do is but *to take the cup of salvation and call upon his name*⁴ [ver. 13]; and what rendering is there in this taking? If I could take the cup of tribulation, and drink it off, for his sake, this perhaps might be a rendering of some value; but this, God knows, is no work for me to do. It was his work who said, Can ye drink of the cup of which I shall drink?⁵ Indeed, he drank of the cup of tribulation, to the end that we might take the cup of salvation, but then in taking it we must call upon his name—upon his name, and upon no other's; for else we shall make it a cup of condemnation, seeing there is no name under heaven in which we may be saved, but only the name of Jesus.⁶

Yet it may be some rendering to the Lord if I pay my vows, and do, as it were, my penance openly: I will therefore pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people⁷ [ver. 14]. But might he not pay his vows as well in his closet, between God and himself, as to do it publicly? No, my soul, it serves not his turn—indeed, not God's turn, but he must pay them in the presence of all his people; yet not to the end he should be applauded for a just prayer; for though he pay them, yet he can never pay them to the full; but to the

¹ Heb. xii. 6. ² 2 Cor. iv. 17. ³ Ps. cxvi. 12: "What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?" ⁴ Ps. cxvi. 13: "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD." ⁵ Matt. xx. 22; Mark x. 38. ⁶ Acts iv. 12. ⁷ Ps. cxvi. 14: "I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people."

end that men, seeing his good works, may glorify God by his example;¹ and the rather, perhaps, for that David was a king, and the king's example prevails much with the people, to make them pay their vows to God; but most of all, that by this means David's piety may not be barren, but may make a breed of piety in the people also, which may be one mystical reason why it was counted a curse in Israel to be barren; for he that pays not his vows to God in the presence of his people, may well be said to be barren in Israel, seeing he begets no children to God by his example. And perhaps, also, the vows which David means here, was the doing of some mean things unfit in show for the dignity of a king, as when it was thought a base thing in him to dance before the ark, he then vowed he would be baser yet;² and in this case, to pay his vows before the people becomes a matter of necessity, for as there is no honour to a man whilst he is by himself alone, so there is no shame to a man but before people; and therefore to show that he is not ashamed to do anything how mean soever, so it may tend to the glorifying of God, he will pay his vows in the presence of all his people; and he will do it though it cost him his life, for if he die for it he knows that *Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints* [ver. 15].

But that which is precious is commonly desired; and doth God then desire the death of his saints? He desires, no doubt, that death of his saints which is to die to sin,³ but for any other death of his saints, it is therefore said to be precious in his sight, because he lays it up with the greater carefulness; and for this it is there are such several mansions in God's house,⁴ that to them whose death is precious in his sight, he may assign the most glorious mansions. This indeed is the reward of martyrdom; and the encouragement of martyrs, though their sufferings be most insufferable, their tortures most intolerable, yet this makes amends for all, that Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints; for if it be so great a happiness to be acceptable in his sight, how great a happiness must it be to be precious in

¹ Matt. v. 16.² 2 Sam. vi. 16, 20—22.³ Rom. vi. 10, 11.⁴ John xiv. 2.

his sight? When God at the creation looked upon all his works, it is said he saw them to be all exceeding good;¹ but it is not said that any of them were precious in his sight; and how then comes death to be precious in his sight, that was none of his works, but is a destroyer of his works? Is it possible that a thing which destroys his creatures should have a title of more value in his sight than his creatures themselves? O my soul, this is one of the miracles of his saints, and perhaps one of those which Christ meant when he said to his apostles that greater miracles than he did, they should do themselves; for what greater miracle than this, that death, which of itself is a thing most vile in the sight of God, yet once embraced by his saints, as it were by their touch only, becomes precious in his sight? and to alter a thing from being vile to be precious, is it not a greater miracle than to turn water into wine?² Indeed so it is: death doth not damnify³ his saints, but his saints do dignify death; death takes nothing away from his saints' happiness, but his saints add lustre to death's vileness; and it is happy for death that ever it met with any of God's saints, for there was no way for it else in the world to be ever had in any account. But why say I, in the world? for it is of no account in the world for all this. It is but only in the sight of God; but indeed this only is all in all; for to be precious in God's sight is more to be prized than the world itself; for when the world shall pass away, and all the glory of it be laid in the dust, then shall trophies be erected for the death of his saints; and when all monuments of the world shall be utterly defaced, and all records quite razed out, yet the death of his saints shall stand registered still, in fair red letters, in the calendar of heaven; for if there be glory laid up for them that die in the Lord, much more shall they be glorified that die for the Lord.

I have wondered oftentimes why God will suffer his saints to die: I mean not the death natural; for I know, *statutum est omnibus semel mori* [it is appointed unto all men once to die],⁴ but the death that is by violence, and with torture;

¹ Gen. i. 31.² John ii. 9.³ Injure, inflict loss upon.⁴ Heb. ix. 27.

for who could endure to see them he loves so cruelly handled? But now I see the reason of it; for Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints; and what marvel then if he suffer his saints to die when by dying they are wrought and made fit jewels to be set in his cabinet? for as God hath a bottle which he fills up with the tears of his saints,¹ so I may say he hath a cabinet which he decks up with the deaths of his saints; and, O my soul, if thou couldst but comprehend what a glory it is to serve for a jewel in the decking up of God's cabinet, thou wouldst never wonder why he suffers his saints to be put to death, though with never so great torments, for it is but the same which St. Paul saith, The afflictions of this life are not worthy of the glory that shall be revealed.²

But if you will have a glass to view the extent of this preciousness, and plainly to see how precious in the sight of God the death of his saints is, then look upon the revenge that is taken for it, for there is nothing that God takes so much to heart, and of which he takes so sharp revenge, as the death of his saints. To touch them, is to touch the apple of his eye;³ and if the punishment of Cain⁴ be not thought sufficient to make it appear, at least the complaint of Christ against Jerusalem will be sufficient: O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets!⁵ and it is thought by some that the destruction of Jerusalem was the rather hastened to revenge the death of James who was called the Just; but howsoever, this we know, it was therefore executed to revenge the death of Jesus, who was truly the Just; and may we not well take notice that the death was exceeding precious when the revenge that was taken was so exceeding furious? But why speak I of death, when I may yet do God good service in life; and if the death of his saints be precious in his sight, certainly the life of his servants is not unregarded; for whether we die, we die to the Lord; or whether we live, we live to the Lord;⁶ and though in this life we cannot expect the reward of saints, yet in this life we may claim the respect of servants, and in

¹ Ps. lvi. 8. ² Rom. viii. 18. ³ Zech. ii. 8. ⁴ Gen. iv. 11, 12. ⁵ Matt. xxiii. 37; Luke xiii. 34. ⁶ Rom. xiv. 8.

this I claim an interest myself; for *truly, O LORD, I am thy servant*¹ [ver. 16]; and oh that I could serve thee so truly that I might hear thee say, *Euge, done serve* [Well done, thou good servant];² for we are all very ready to profess ourselves thy servants, but very unready to do the service of our profession, and specially in these times when servant is grown to be a word of compliment rather than of truth; that to say, I am thy servant, is all one as to say, I am a hypocrite. But, O Lord, let it not be found so in me, not be thought so of me, for I am thy servant by a double right, (and oh that I could do thee double service!) as thou art the Lord of life, and as I am the son of thy handmaid: not of Hagar, but of Sarah; not of the bond-woman, but of the free;³ and therefore I serve thee, not in fear, but in love; or there fore in fear, because in love; and then is service best done when it is done in love; and in love indeed I am bound to serve thee; for *thou hast loosed my bonds*,—the bonds of death which compassed me about, by delivering me from a dangerous sickness, and restoring me to health, or in a higher kind. Thou hast loosed my bonds by freeing me from being a captive to be a servant; and which is more, from being a servant to be a son; and more than this yet, from being a son of thy handmaid, to be a son of thyself, and therefore indeed a son of thyself, because a son of thy handmaid, for what is thy handmaid but thy Church? and he that is not born of this handmaid, though he may have the general benefit of a servant, sustenance and protection, yet he can never have the special benefits of a son, freedom and inheritance.

Or thou hast loosed my bonds, thou hast freed me from the heavy yoke of the ceremonies of the law, and hast enfranchised me with the glorious liberty of the gospel; that where before thou didst require the sacrifice of servants, which was the blood of beasts; now thou acceptest the sacrifice of sons, which is prayer and thanksgiving: *I will therefore offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and call upon*

¹ Ps. cxvi. 16: "O LORD, truly I *am* thy servant, I *am* thy servant, *and* the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds." ² Matt. xxv. 21, 23. ³ Gal. iv. 22—26, 31.

thy name¹ [ver. 17]; for prayer and thanksgiving make both but one sacrifice; and seeing all sacrifice is due only to thee, therefore to thee only I will offer both my thanksgiving and my prayer. I could not make thanksgiving a sacrifice if prayer did not begin it; I could not make prayer a sacrifice if thanksgiving did not finish it. If there should be thanksgiving, and no prayer, the sacrifice would want a foot; if prayer, and no thanksgiving, it would want a head; for as the *basis* [foundation] is prayer, so the *coronis* [completion] is thanksgiving; although perhaps thanksgiving be but the act, and thankfulness the habit, and it is the habit that makes the sacrifice, because it must be *juge sacrificium*—a continual sacrifice, which the act cannot be.² And if there had been a word to express the habit of praying, as thankfulness doth of thanksgiving, perhaps St. Paul would have used it where he saith, Pray continually,³ for who can doubt but he means the habit of praying, and not the act? and where he saith, In all things give thanks⁴ (*εὐχαριστεῖτε*), it intends perhaps but this, In all things be thankful.

And what then shall the thankfulness or the thanksgiving be that I will offer to God for a sacrifice? O my soul, it shall be an acknowledging of his benefits, and of his only benefits; it shall be a proclaiming him to be my patron, and my only patron; it shall be an extolling him for his mercy in forgiving my sins, for his graciousness in healing all my infirmities, for his compassion in redeeming my soul from destruction, and for his bounty in crowning me with loving-kindness and tender mercies;⁵ it shall be indeed a vowing to him the whole service of all the faculties of my soul and body. And not to be done in a corner, as though I were not willing it should be known; nor before some few people only, as though I were loth too many should see it; but *I will pay my vows to him in the presence of all his people*⁶ [ver. 18], that young and old, rich and poor, high and low, may all be witnesses of my thankfulness: this, for

¹ Ps. cxvi. 17: "I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and I will call upon the name of the LORD." ² Heb. xiii. 15. ³ 1 Thess. v. 17: "Pray without ceasing." ⁴ 2 Thess. v. 18. ⁵ Ps. ciii. 3, 4. ⁶ Ps. cxvi. 18: "I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people."

the persons before whom it shall be done ; and then for the place in which it shall be done : it shall be done *in the courts of the LORD's house*¹ [ver. 19] ; if any place be more conspicuous, more public than other, it shall be done there, it shall be done *in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem* ; that the fame of it may be spread, that the sound of it may equally go forth into all parts of the world, that as all thy people shall be beholders of my thankfulness, so all the world shall be admirers of thy goodness ; and as there is in heaven an alleluia of thy saints, so there shall be in earth an alleluia of thy servants, of which number, of both which numbers, my hope is to be one ; and that I may be sure to be one, O my soul, praise thou the Lord ; and because my own praising will be but a very small service, therefore mend it, my soul, by calling upon others, and saying, Praise ye the Lord.

¹ Ps. cxvi. 19 : "In the courts of the LORD's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD."

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(*Vide* also footnote to pp. xxxvi. and xxxvii. of Memorial-Introduction

161^a *for* Lu. xxiii. 62—65, *read* Matt. xxvii. 29, 30, Mark xiv. 65.
345^a *for* clvi. *read* cxli.

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